

Fall Edition 2012

# Combat Edge



AIR COMBAT COMMAND'S SAFETY MAGAZINE



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GIVE  
UP



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Towards a Culture of Risk Management

The Combat Edge Magazine  
Air Combat Command Directorate of Safety



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COVER ART BY: KEN CHANDLER

# ACCent

## ON SAFETY



**Colonel Sidney F. Mayeux**  
Director of Safety

In his July 2012 article, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Roy delivered a brilliant and timely reminder to all Airmen to not let today's technologies replace real live human relationships. Our Tweets, Skypes, and Facebook “friendships” are increasingly supplanting actual face-to-face interaction to the detriment of our human connections. As a Safety Warrior, I easily see a correlation between Chief Roy's concerns and ACC mishap prevention.

When General Mike Hostage, ACC Commander, issued his FY12 Safety Focus for the command last fall, he built upon our ongoing foundation of Leadership and Commander Involvement by reinforcing that foundation through DISCIPLINE and PROFESSIONALISM. Commanders and supervisors are doing what they can to execute safety programs and training, giving ACC Airmen all available tools to minimize risk, but your leaders can't be everywhere all the time. Disciplined and profession Airmen ensure mishap prevention efforts carry on even when direct supervision isn't around.

So how does this relate to Chief Roy's message? Easy. “Leadership by Blackberry” doesn't amount to eyes-on Leadership and Commander Involvement. Posting a tweet is one way to employ peer-to-peer accountability, but it's hardly as effective as the in-person Airman-to-Airman approach. Being good Wingmen means grabbing your fellow Airman's arm and leading them out of any dangerous situation, even if they'll be insulted by it (God forbid).

Commanders and Supervisors, look your Airmen in the eye. Airmen, shut off those iPhones and get out of the dorm with your Wingmen. Learn how to tell each other, “Dude, that's not smart. Give me the keys.” Strengthen those relationships, open those lines of communication, THEN use technology to enhance the power of human interaction. Safety Teams, put your hands on the hazards and fix them ... not with a mouse click, but with fingerprints and sweat.

Solid wing Safety programs require aggressive boots-on-the-ground physical look-sees in the work centers, on the flight line, at the front gate and in the clubs and dorms. A Safety professional who thinks we can monitor and manage the health and status of his unit's safety program through digital portals, like the Air Force Safety Automated System (AFSAS), has committed himself to a REACTIVE safety approach. Now don't get me wrong; AFSAS has come a long way since its first version in 2007, but it's still merely a soda straw. You've got to get out there, see and talk to the people, get your boots dirty. To paraphrase Chief Roy, PROACTIVE Mishap Prevention is a “face-to-face, one-on-one” endeavor.

People make the difference in other peoples' lives, not technology. iPhone apps are like honey badgers: They're cool, but they don't care. Airmen bring their wingmen home, no matter how long it takes. Airmen “never leave a wingman behind ... never falter ... will not fail.”

This month we tell you about Wingmen who never gave up, and brought home two Airmen lost to enemy fire over North Vietnam and missing for 44 years. Today's technology helped confirm our Wingmen's identities, but resilient Airmen fulfilled the personal commitment to bring them home to their families and a grateful nation.



# NEVER GIVE UP

BY COL. J. ALAN MARSHALL, Ph.D.



During a calm June morning, a lone F-4C Phantom flew over a quiet field below. There were no anti-aircraft rounds streaking through the air, nor were there any flares or loud explosions on the ground. The scene was very different 44 years earlier. On the night of July 5, 1968, a flight of F-4C Phantoms flew a night combat mission over the Quang Binh Province near the central coast of North Vietnam. U.S. Air Force pilots Maj. Ed Silver and 1st Lt. Bruce Lawrence were in the lead aircraft of the formation and tasked with dropping illumination flares for armed reconnaissance. As the formation maneuvered above, anti-aircraft artillery rounds and small arms tracers blanketed the night sky in an effort to prevent the Phantoms from accomplishing their mission. Suddenly, the lead aircraft was struck and the wingman reported seeing a large explosion and streaks of fire trailing out of the bottom of Silver and Lawrence's aircraft<sup>1</sup>. After a smaller secondary explosion, the aircraft rapidly descended and crashed approximately 23 miles southwest of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam<sup>3</sup>. No parachutes were visible in the dark night and no transmissions were ever received from the aircrew. Due to intense hostile fire and the fact that the crash site was well within North Vietnam, a search and rescue mission was not possible. Ed Silver and Bruce Lawrence were designated as "Missing in Action" and were never heard from again<sup>1</sup>. However, family, friends and the nation did not give up on bringing them home.

Edward Dean Silver was born February 2, 1934 in Batavia, Iowa and was raised in Junction City, Ore. He graduated from Junction City High School in 1952 and attended Oregon State University where he enrolled in ROTC. After graduation, Silver joined the Air Force and excelled in pilot training at Vance Air Force Base, Okla. where he was selected as an instructor pilot. Silver then spent a tour as an exchange instructor pilot in Saudi Arabia tirelessly training foreign air force pilots how to fly. In 1968, Maj. Silver joined Tactical Air Command (the precursor to Air Combat Command) and deployed to the 557th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 12th Tactical Fighter Wing, Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. After the repatriation of Vietnam prisoners of war during Operation Home Coming in 1973, a returning POW reported being forced to watch a North Vietnamese propaganda film showing the body of an American flyer in a flight suit with the name of "Silver" visible on the flight suit name tag<sup>2</sup>. Vietnam War POWs made a habit of memorizing names of fellow POWs identified while in captivity; however, no returning POW was able to report seeing either Silver or Lawrence in captivity and both men were declared "Killed in Action, body not recovered, based on presumptive finding of death."<sup>6</sup> Prior to being designated as KIA on February 25, 1977, Silver was promoted to lieutenant colonel<sup>7</sup>.





Bruce Edward Lawrence was born on January 12, 1943 and was raised in Phillipsburg, N.J.<sup>2</sup>. Lawrence graduated from Phillipsburg High School in 1960 where he was a star player in basketball, baseball and football. A caption under Lawrence's high school year book picture stated "Bruce will one day fly jet airplanes."<sup>5</sup> After graduation Lawrence joined the Air Force but was discharged for problems with his feet. However, Lawrence never gave up on his dream of flying and in 1961 he attended Rutgers University in New Brunswick,



N.J. where he attempted to join ROTC, but was rejected for continued problems with his feet<sup>8</sup>. Lawrence did not let his medical problems stop him from starring on the Rutgers football team as an outstanding linebacker and offensive halfback. In fact, due to his never give up attitude, Lawrence was eventually selected as the co-captain of the varsity football team and later graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree. In October of 1965, Lawrence was finally able to successfully join the Air Force. He graduated from Officer Training School and earned his pilot wings in 1966 at Craig Air

Force Base, Ala.<sup>3</sup>. Lawrence deployed to Vietnam after mission-specific pilot training and landed in the same squadron as Silver in 1968, setting up their fateful last flight together. Prior to being designated as KIA in 1977,

Lawrence was promoted through the rank of captain and then to major<sup>7</sup>.

In 1993, a joint American/Vietnamese team traveled to Quang Binh Province to excavate a potential Vietnam War era crash site but harsh terrain limited access to the site. Undeterred, the U.S. team returned in 1998 and was able to excavate the crash site and recover military equipment and human remains. Analysis of equipment and specimens from this excavation led investigators to determine that the crash site was that of Silver and Lawrence's Phantom and that the human remains were most likely from the missing aircrew. However, it would be years before new forensic techniques would emerge to allow positive identification. In June 2011, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used both mitochondrial and nuclear DNA to positively match both Silver and Lawrence to their living relatives<sup>1</sup>. In September 2011, Silver and Lawrence's remains were escorted by an Air Force Honor Guard from Joint-Base Pearl-Harbor-



Photo by: Staff Sgt. Aaron Allmon

Artwork by: Ken Chandler





Top 3 Photos by: 2nd Lt. Michael Gibson



Hickam, Hawaii to final burial locations in the mainland. Lawrence's hometown, Phillipsburg, N.J., transported his casket on a horse drawn caisson down South Main Street to his memorial service. After the memorial service, firefighters, police and local veterans escorted the motorcade for Major Lawrence's funeral procession to the cemetery<sup>4</sup>. The entire town lined the procession route saluting and waving flags as the motorcade passed. Lawrence's identified remains were then laid to rest next to his parents in the Raubsville Cemetery in Williams Township, Pa. Richard Lawrence, Maj. Lawrence's older brother, said to a standing room only crowd at the memorial service that Bruce "would probably be very embarrassed by [all] this, but he would also be very appreciative."<sup>8</sup> Silver's identified remains were later buried with full military honors on June 6, 2012 in Arlington National Cemetery leaving unidentified remains of both crew members to be buried in a group burial in Section 60 of Arlington the next day. Group burials are for unidentified remains that could belong to either or both aircrew members. Silver and Lawrence's group burial garnered full military honors including an Air Force band. Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery is also the final resting place for many of the veterans killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During their group burial at Arlington, a single F-4C Phantom II flew over family and friends as Silver and Lawrence were buried together as a crew. Ever since that hot summer night in 1968, when their wingman circled above in an effort to make contact with the aircrew, family, friends and a grateful nation have been waiting for Silver and Lawrence's return. In the case of Silver and Lawrence, the resilience of family members, friends, the community and the nation is remarkable. Airmen in Air Combat Command can take solace from Silver and Lawrence's story in that no matter where they go, or what they do, their Air Force family and the nation as a whole will make every effort to bring them home. We can all be assured that our fellow Airmen will show the same tenacity in caring for us and our families as Lawrence showed in his repeated attempts to join the Air Force and serve his country in Vietnam. This refusal to give up is a uniquely American value and Airmen should remember this value when things get tough in their personal lives. The determination that an individual needs to persevere

personal challenges is the same trait that a nation needs to commit to bringing home POWs and MIAs. In the same way, the Air Force and ACC is resilient because Airmen are resilient. Although Silver and Lawrence could have never imagined that so many people would refuse to give up on them so many years after their noble sacrifice,

as Richard Lawrence said in his brother's memorial service they "would also be very appreciative" for all the effort their nation and community put into their return<sup>8</sup>. We should all similarly commit to never giving up on ourselves or our fellow Airmen. A "never give up" attitude is the heart of Airmen resilience. ✈️

Photo by: Maj. Francisco G. Hamm



<sup>1</sup>Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, June 5, 2012, Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup>Report of Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs United States Senate, 13 January, 1993.

<sup>3</sup>Noto-Wynkoop. (2011). Bruce Edward Lawrence. Retrieved from <http://www.noto-wynkoop.com/obits/obituary.php?id=110901>.

<sup>4</sup>Wojcik, S. (2011). Vietnam veteran Bruce Lawrence to return home with military procession, funeral. The Express-Times. September 19, 2011.

<sup>5</sup>Major Bruce Edward Lawrence. (2012). Retrieved from <http://vietnamveteransmemorial.homestead.com/BruceLawrence.html>.

<sup>6</sup>POW Network. (2012). Edward Dean Lawrence. Retrieved from <http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/s/s029.htm>.

<sup>7</sup>Faces from the Wall. (2012). Edward Dean Silver. Retrieved from <http://www.facesfromthewall.com/orvn/OR1968jul.html>.

<sup>8</sup>Malone, J. (2011). Hundreds turn out for Bruce Lawrence's memorial service in Phillipsburg



A photograph of a military helicopter, likely an HH-60G Pave Hawk, with a technician in camouflage uniform standing by the rotor hub. The technician is looking towards the camera. The helicopter's tail rotor and main rotor are visible. The background is a clear sky.

These Things We Do ...

# That Others May Live

BY TECH. SGT. VERNON CUNNINGHAM

*“Nothing makes me happier than when I see these blades spin and the helicopter take off,”*

said Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Kopplin, 33rd Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit lead flying helicopter crew chief. “Knowing I worked on it; knowing that Airmen that I lead have worked on it; knowing that we have done everything that we were supposed to do – by the book – 100 percent. When an aircraft takes off and comes back ... it’s a great feeling every time.”

Kopplin and the dedicated maintainers of the 33rd EHMU’s primary mission is to ensure that Bagram’s fleet of HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters are safe, air worthy, and combat ready so their aircrew and pararescuemen can go out and perform their rescue missions in support of NATO and Afghan forces in Afghanistan.

For the Bagram Pave Hawk maintainers, the job boils down to a single task.

“On a day-to-day basis, I get aircraft ready to fly,” said Senior Airman Hunter Rains, 33rd EHMU rescue crew chief.

“The Pave Hawk is a vessel to take the PJs where they need to be and for the back-enders (gunners) to be able to protect those PJs so they are able to get around,” said Rains. “Where we come into play is that we get these helicopters ready on a daily basis and make sure the helicopter operates properly.”





The helicopter maintainers work a non-stop alert schedule to maintain high mission-capable ratings. They are ready to respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1st Lt. Pelenato Tagoi, 33 EHMU officer in charge, said one of the biggest benefits of doing rescue helicopter maintenance at Bagram is the opportunity to work alongside U.S. Army and South Korean helicopter maintenance teams.

"Being able to share resources, knowledge and capabilities has

increased the overall health of our helicopter units here at Bagram," said Tagoi.

"Without them, there is no mission," said Lt. Col. David R. St. Onge, 83rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron commander. "Our team is phenomenal. Without a helicopter, we have no mission. We could have the best pilots, the best back-enders, the best guardian angels or pararescuemen ... but, if there is no helicopter to fly then we would be driving around in trucks."

The colonel's sentiments were echoed by the very people who rely on Bagram's rescue helicopters. "I have to have faith in the maintenance crew," said Staff Sgt. Lucas Gough, 83rd ERQS pararescueman. "We have the best maintenance crew out there for this mission because they are our lifeline. We take off with these HH-60s and if there are any issues in flight, you've got anywhere from six to seven souls on board. These guys have never let us down, and it means a lot."

When the Pave Hawk maintainers get an alert call, they drop everything they are doing and sprint as fast as possible to the flight line to get their aircraft prepared to fly.

"We are pulling plugs, covers, tie-down straps and cranking APUs so that all our operators and PJs have to do is jump in the aircraft and set off to go rescue somebody," said Tagoi.

Senior Master Sgt. Timothy Debeaux, 33 EHMU superintendent, has worked as a helicopter crew chief for 20 years, serving 11 years as an HH-60 crew chief. He said the HH-60 maintainers' actions during a scramble are all about saving lives.

"The mindset during a scramble is to not be last," said Debeaux. "The thought is if you get there earlier then maybe you will give the PJs that extra second to go rescue someone.

"PJs have this thing they call 'The Golden Hour'," said Debeaux. "The golden hour is the optimal response time from injury to medical treatment. If we take too long to launch an aircraft then that hour is cut down. If we don't get up in a hurry then it could be too late to get that save."

Gough agreed that the rescue mission relies on all the elements coming together quickly.

"Time is life," he said. "It is absolutely critical for us to get off the ground as soon as possible to get to whoever might be wounded out there on the battlefield. We really rely on these maintainers to always be efficient in what they are doing. They always get out there fast and allow us to get off the ground and into the battlefield where we are able to bring guys back."



The maintainers also recognize and respect the symbiotic relationship among the rescue units.

"If we can give the PJ the opportunity to reach that injured person while he is still alive, there is a great chance that he'll live," said Rains.

It takes a special kind of person to work as a Pave Hawk maintainer.

"The teams we bring out here to support the war fighters are those who are the most qualified, trained and experienced ... but, also those who can perform under extreme pressure," said Tagoi. "They have the confidence and courage in the face of danger and adversity to be able to perform their duties effectively in a combat environment.

"It's like running a marathon, but you're doing a sprint without being able to trip or fall down ... ever," said Rains. "If anything ever happens to my helicopter and there is some guy out there, then it's on me. I have to get it right or fix what's wrong."

Rains went on to note that the rescue mission which he is supporting strengthens coalition forces by denying insurgents the opportunity to take service members permanently out of the fight.

Sgt. Onge said everybody has a part to play in combat rescue, to include all DoD services and coalition forces.

"Saving lives is the bottom line for combat," he said. "We give those soldiers the peace of mind to know that if you do get injured, someone is coming to get you and they are going to get there fast."

The maintainers' speed and skill have truly paid off.

They've maintained nearly perfect Pave Hawk mission readiness ratings, giving the PJs the wings with which they have saved more than 20 lives and transported more than 100 patients to medical centers this year.

"It is truly an honor and a privilege for me to lead and serve with some of the finest rescue maintainers in the world who exemplify commitment to duty, courage in the face of danger and adversity, and just a selfless dedication to serve," said Tagoi.

"They truly have answered their nation's call time and time again. They truly live up to their motto:

***These things we do ... that others may live.***"







# BASH

## It's Not Just Another Four-Letter Acronym

BY 55TH WING FLIGHT SAFETY  
PHOTOS BY MR. JOSH PLUEGER

Over the past seven years, the Offutt Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) program has undergone a radical transformation. Described as an average BASH program in 2005, Offutt's current program was recently recognized as "Best in Air Combat Command" during its 2012 Safety Program Management Evaluation. At Offutt AFB, the average cost of birdstrike damage since FY09 has been reduced by over \$1.6 million per year as compared to the previous five years. FY11 was the best year on record with only \$29K in birdstrike damage. The ongoing effort to hone Offutt's BASH program has resulted in an aggressive use of technology and a strong, persistent culture of innovation through overwhelming leadership, base and community support.

The transformational event was a literal baptism of fire with bent metal and cooked goose. Shortly after sunset on February 22, 2005, an E-4B assigned to Offutt AFB was on short final to a planned go around. At approximately 1,000 feet above the ground, the Boeing 747 aircraft struck a Canada goose in its number two engine. The crew immediately heard a loud bang, felt severe vibrations and smelled fumes in the cockpit. An RC-135 holding short of the runway reported seeing the E-4B's number two engine sparking with burning debris falling from the aircraft. The remnants of the engine's turbine section landed in the infield beyond the RC-135's left wing and started a large grass fire. As a testament to the crew's skill, they brought the E-4B around for an emergency landing without any further damage or any injuries to the crew. The result of this single birdstrike was over \$8M in damage and a very close call for two strategically critical aircraft. Following this incident, Offutt leadership took a closer look at its BASH program and the risk posed by avian hazards.





The first question asked was exactly what were the hazards posed by birds to local aircraft? Offutt AFB sits less than two miles west of the Missouri River in the middle of the confluence between the Central and Mississippi migratory flyways. Several lakes, including the base lake on the approach end of the runway, are located between the airfield and river with surrounding wetlands. They provide ideal habitats for numerous local

and migratory species. Agricultural fields surround the approach and departure corridors, presenting year-round feeding and roosting grounds. Additionally, the 1,500-acre Schilling Wildlife Management Area, located just four miles south of the base, and the 2,000-acre DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, less than 35 miles to the north, provide protected sanctuaries for millions of migrating waterfowl on their long journeys.

The second question asked was whether the Offutt BASH program was adequate to meet the risk? In 2005, Offutt had a typical BASH program. A Supervisor of Flying (SOF) was on duty in a truck on the airfield during flight operations. SOFs searched for birds with binoculars and called the Bird Watch Condition (BWC) along with Tower controllers and Airfield Operations. Offutt followed AFPAM 91-212 guidance on Phase I and Phase II operations. Relocation, deterrence and depredation were all part of the active effort to mitigate the risk.

In the months and years following the E-4B mishap, the Offutt program has changed its approach to reducing the risk of avian hazards. First, the goal of the BASH program has been clarified. While the elimination of all birdstrikes is a noble goal in theory, in practice it is impractical and dilutes precious resources. The current BASH program is based on the recognition that birdstrikes will occur. However, damaging strikes can be reduced or eliminated. To achieve this goal, the program is focused on identification, environmental modification and mitigation.

The BASH team at Offutt AFB is composed of Active Duty, Air National Guard and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services experts that manage the wildlife environment on and around the airfield. The expertise and professionalism that Offutt's USDA federal affiliates bring is unsurpassed. While they conduct relocation, deterrence and kinetic depredation on the airfield, they have also increased their scope to work with local landowners. Offutt's USDA team has established a network within a five-mile radius of the airfield of local cooperators to include: farmers, homeowners, sod farmers and business owners. Under the cooperator program, the local community not only reports changes in bird activity, but also allows Offutt's USDA team to enter their property and mitigate the hazards.







Assisting the USDA efforts to locate avian hazards, Offutt has operated a MERLIN™ avian radar since February 2009. The radar provides real-time information on bird concentrations and movements on and around the airfield. The system provides dedicated displays to the Flight Safety office, truck and SOF station in the control tower. Offutt's SOFs and tower personnel utilize the radar display as a situational awareness tool to help recognize and locate avian hazards more quickly than with binoculars alone. With a dedicated SOF station in the control tower, information on bird activity flows freely between the SOF, airborne crews and tower controllers.

In an effort to better utilize resources, Offutt has begun to shift focus from confronting avian hazards directly to modifying the environment that they rely on. Aggressive efforts to control rabbits, ground squirrels and other small mammals have been paired with pigeon eradication to push raptors off the airfield. Additionally, Offutt now sprays an herbicide/pesticide combination on the airfield twice a year. The sprays are based upon data from our USDA biologist to coincide with spring avian nesting seasons and fall migratory preparations. The effects of these attempts to sterilize the airfield have already been seen. Large flocks of sparrows and starlings, notoriously difficult to remove from the airfield, are no longer observed. The few remaining birds perch on the perimeter fence looking for food off base. Further mitigation efforts included removing trees around certain parts of the airfield that historically provided nesting spots for smaller birds.

Offutt's BASH team has utilized almost every traditional mitigation tool. While propane cannons and bird foggers have proven to be of limited effectiveness, shotguns and pyrotechnics have continued to form the core of our mitigation

efforts. Last fall in an effort to help address the limited range of previous methods, a Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) was added to the BASH program. Essentially a large speaker, the LRAD allows our BASH team to project any sound file at 148dB for up to two kilometers. While still early in testing, the effect on raptors has been impressive. On multiple occasions, Red Tailed Hawks circling at altitudes of 1,000 feet or more have been driven from the airfield.

With the addition of the MERLIN™ avian radar in FY09, the Offutt BASH program began its current push to better incorporate new technologies to reduce birdstrikes. While the data has shown that the average annual number of birdstrikes and damaging birdstrikes has not changed much since FY04, large gains have been made in the damage rate per flight hour. As the program continues to evolve, focus has turned back to process itself. Technology has proven to be a formidable tool in avian hazard reduction; however, better integration and training with Flight Safety, the SOF, aircrew and tower controllers will help Offutt approach its goal of zero damaging strikes.✈

Offutt AFB	FY04-FY11	FY04-FY08	FY09-FY11	Change	
Total Number of Birdstrikes	706	449	257		
Average Number of Birdstrikes	88.3	89.8	85.7	-4.1	-4.60%
Total Number of Damaging Birdstrikes	29	19	10		
Average Number of Damaging Birdstrikes	3.6	3.8	3.3	-0.5	-12.30%
Total Annual Cost	\$9,229,007.00	\$8,883,939.00	\$345,068.00		
Average Annual Cost	\$1,153,625.88	\$1,776,787.80	\$115,022.67	(\$1,661,765.13)	-93.50%
Flight Hours	84,657.00	47,353.00	37,304.00		
Average Flight Hours	10,582.10	9,470.60	12,434.70	2,964.10	31.30%
Flight Hours Between Strikes	130.4	120	147.7	27.7	23.10%
Flight Hours Between Damaging Strikes	4,286.20	4,263.30	4,324.40	61.2	1.40%
Damage (\$) per Flight Hour	\$128.02	\$199.32	\$9.18	(\$190.14)	-95.40%



## Aircrew Safety



**SENTRY 40 AIRCREW, 964 AACs, TINKER AFB, OKLA.** Sentry 40 was returning to Tinker AFB when they were faced with an abnormal aircraft system malfunction – the hydraulic reservoir was at 1.5 gallons and decreasing. The FE concluded the leak was in the #2 fluid shutoff valve and pump. The AC directed the Hydraulic Leak Isolation checklist be run again, due to inconsistencies in hydraulic system. The decisive actions of the crew of Sentry 40 broke the chain of events that could have resulted in catastrophic damage to a \$330 Million E-3 aircraft, and ensured the safety of 30 crewmembers. *(June 12)*

**LT. COL. GREGORY CARMICHAEL, CAPTS. PAUL LAMERS, MATTHEW GRANTHAM, BYRON NEIRA AND DANIEL ELDER, AND STAFF SGT. JOHN BERGGREN, 17 RS, CREECH AFB, NEV.** After gaining control of a crippled MQ-1B, it was noticed that an oil level was dropping very quickly. Visual inspection revealed a large oil leak running along the fuselage and propeller. Indications of low oil pressure, high turbo oil temp and low exhaust gas temp rapidly followed. Within a few seconds, the engine seized. After four minutes and a loss of 3,000 feet, the LRE took control of the aircraft and executed a successful forced landing. *(July 12)*

## Crew Chief Safety



**STAFF SGT. NICHOLAS P. COZEE, 455 EAMXS, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN.** During recovery of an EC-130H, Sgt. Cozee noticed smoke billowing out from the right side main landing gear as the brakes were set. He soon realized that it was not a “hot brake” but a possible hydraulic leak that erupted after the pilot set the parking brake. He grabbed a fire extinguisher and manned the hose from a safe position to keep watch in case flames erupted from the wheel well. His vigilant perception of the hazard, quick and calm actions averted a potentially life-threatening situation. *(June 12)*

**STAFF SGT. DAMON J. COOLEY, 7 AMXS, DYESS AFB, TEXAS.** While performing daily aircraft form inspections, Sgt. Cooley recognized the nose landing gear strut of a B-1B aircraft was extended higher than the prescribed limits for an aircraft on the ground. He took action to prevent the B-1’s center of gravity from shifting too far aft and tipping the aircraft on its tail. He led a team to defuel and transfer fuel to safe levels allowing the aircraft to level down from extreme nose attitude. His proactive thinking and immediate actions averted a major aircraft incident, preventing injury and significant damage. *(July 12)*

## Flight Line Safety



**TECHNICAL SGT. CRYSTAL APONTE, SENIOR AIRMEN CLAYTON BARRUS AND DAVID TROTT, 379TH EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS SUPPORT SQUADRON, AL UDEID AB, QATAR.** This team of controllers initiated a break-out for a C-130 opposite direction arrival due to a direct conflict with the Flight Check aircraft conducting a recorded run in low visibility conditions. Their exceptional crew resource management and situational awareness accommodated FC65’s inspection requirements and provided decision vectors to re-sequence the C-130 for a safe landing. *(June 12)*

**STAFF SGT. SEAN A. BUSBY, 964 EAACS, CURACAO.** Sgt. Busby noticed some nickel and quarter-sized concrete rocks, wind-blown garbage, and other freight objects during pre-flight of an E-3. He organized 21 aircrew members into a FOD-walk formation, swept the ramp and corresponding taxiway for all foreign objects. Once complete, the team had collected a gallon-size bag of foreign objects in addition to rocks discarded into the grass adjacent to the taxiway. His initiative prevented damage to an E-3 worth \$330M. *(July 12)*

## Weapons Safety



**STAFF SGT. TERRY J. BLUE, 432 AMXS, 432 WG, CREECH AFB, NEV.** Sgt. Blue was able to identify six faulty home station testers and allowed deployed teams to troubleshoot the 42 defective field testers. The faulty testers provided incorrect test results and failed to adequately verify weapons/avionics electrical wiring. The inaccurate readings provided false assurance of aircraft mission readiness, capability, and personnel safety. Result of his actions – immediate recall of all 500-series AWM-101 testers Air Force-wide and replacement with the older, more reliable 300-series testers. *(June 12)*

## Weapons Safety



**TECH. SGT. GERARDO MARQUEZ, 20 AMXS, SHAW AFB, S.C.** Sgt. Marquez trained over 200 Airmen on proper evacuation procedures using updated cordon overlay grid maps in the event of dropped munitions or munitions involved in an aircraft fire. He also identified eight of 16 out-of-service one step loading adapters and trained the Airmen on the importance of maintaining the safety and serviceability of the equipment the current TCTO. His desire to lead from the front ensured zero weapons safety and reliability write-ups. *(July 12)*

## Ground Safety



**SENIOR AIRMAN LACEY A. YOUNGBLOOD, 9 MXS, 9 RW, BEALE AFB, CALIF.** As unit safety rep for the 9 MXS, Airman Youngblood increased vigilance in individual duty sections by performing over 20 Hazwaste, ground safety and traffic spot checks resulting in the identification of 12 potential hazards. Her keen attention to detail ensured all findings were corrected, mitigating possible injury to personnel and ensuring safety compliance. *(June 12)*

**STAFF SGT. NICHOLAS TKACH AND TECH. SGT. BRETT BURCHFIELD, 10SS JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, VA.** After completing their work in the T-18 aircrew flight equipment section, Sgts. Tkach and Burchfield noticed an F-22A in the hangar leaking JP-8 fuel. They stayed on the scene, at a safe distance, until the fire department finished cleaning the fuel spill and on-call maintenance personnel had been notified. Their quick thinking and tenacious efforts brought a quick resolution to a potentially dangerous situation and saved \$700M in aircraft and equipment. *(July 12)*

## Pilot Safety



**CAPT. ABRAM B. BURK, 75 FS, 23 WG, MOODY AFB, GA.** Capt. Burk was flying a single-ship A-10 FAC(A) night upgrade sortie near Moody AFB. He deconflicted his IP, a 2-ship of Hogs and an inbound 4-ship as the CAS scenario was about to begin. After passing the first 9-line he waited in his block for the first set of fighters to commence their attack when he noticed the master caution light rapidly flashing in his cockpit. A quick glance at the master caution panel revealed an imminent right engine failure; his #2 motor had rapidly degenerated into a compressor stall. His flight discipline and quick action staved off a catastrophic situation affecting the safe return of a doomed Hog! *(June 12)*

**CAPT. SCOTT R. THOMSON, 99 ERS, AL DHAFRA, U.A.E.** Shortly after entering the AOR, Capt. Thomson’s U-2 experienced unprecedented and unique failures of multiple critical aircraft systems – degraded primary flight display data, failure of aircraft back-up control interface, failure of primary avionics process, loss of integrated inertial navigation system/global positioning system and complete autopilot failure. His decisive actions and outstanding airmanship were crucial in preventing injury and the loss of a \$300M high value national asset. *(July 12)*

## Unit Safety



**9TH COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON, 9 RW, BEALE AFB, CALIF.** The 9 CS was proactive in mitigating damage from an HVAC failure by relocating an ADPE workstation, protecting personnel and saving \$16K in possible damages. They revitalized the ESOH program and instated five universal waste collection points. In addition, 100 percent environmental management system training was completed and tracked for the unit. These actions were lauded by the ESOH inspector as “the best program on Beale.” Dedication and a safety mindset netted zero discrepancies during the wing inspection. *(June 12)*

**71ST EXPEDITIONARY AIR CONTROL SQUADRON, AL UDEID AB, QATAR.** The 71 EACS suffered two power outages to the BC3 control system used to provide tactical level command, control and communications to aircraft flying in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. While squadron maintainers scrambled to rapidly identify the root cause of the catastrophic failure, the crews lost BC3 scopes, radar and radio comm. with aircraft working through all of the eastern and southern portions of the AOR. During this massive outage, they expertly employed procedural control measures to ensure safe deconfliction of 189 tactical aircraft while ensuring zero gaps in execution of tasking. *(July 12)*



# Best Practices

## IN ACC SAFETY MANAGEMENT

### Flight Safety Programs

**Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard**  
55 WG, Offutt AFB — Jun 2012

**Airfield/Airspace Encroachment**  
99 ABW, Nellis AFB — Feb 2012

**Trend Analysis**  
9 RW, Beale AFB — Jan 2011

**Mid Air Collision Avoidance**  
366 FW, Mountain Home AFB — Jul 2010

**Mishap Response Plan**  
7 BW, Dyess AFB — Jun 2010

### Ground Safety Programs

**Inspection/Assessment**  
55 WG, Offutt AFB — Jun 2012  
99 ABW, Nellis AFB — Feb 2012

**OJT/Upgrade Training**  
99 ABW, Nellis AFB — Feb 2012

**Supervisor Safety Guide**  
9 RW, Beale AFB — Jan 2011

**Training Classes Database**  
9 RW, Beale AFB — Jan 2011

**Airman Safety Pledge**  
53 WG, Eglin AFB — Dec 2010

**ATV Training**  
49 WG, Holloman AFB — Nov 2010

**Confined Space**  
366 FW, Mountain Home AFB — Jul 2010

**Lockout/Tagout**  
366 FW, Mountain Home AFB — Jul 2010

**Mishap Recommendation Process**  
12 AF, Davis-Monthan AFB — Apr 2010

**Motorcycle Safety**  
23 WG, Moody AFB — Mar 2010

**Annual Inspection Process**  
432 WG, Creech AFB — Feb 2010

### Weapons Safety Programs

**Electro-Magnetic Radiation Analysis**  
4 FW, Seymour Johnson AFB — Oct 2011

**Nuclear Certified Equipment**  
388 FW, Hill AFB — Feb 2011

**Lightning Protection System (CE Involvement)**  
49 WG, Holloman AFB — Nov 2010

**New Commanders' Orientation**  
23 WG, Moody AFB — Mar 2010

**SEW Management Tool "The Brain"**  
23 WG, Moody AFB — Mar 2010











These programs were recognized as best practices in Air Combat Command during Safety Program Management Evaluations. If you are looking to strengthen your Safety Program in one or more of these areas, these folks are doing it exceptionally well.

You can also find an expanded list of strong Safety Programs by becoming a member of the ACC Safety CoP at: <https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/hqaccsafety>

### Mishap Statistics Scoreboard






#### FY12 Flight

As of July 31, 2012

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
1 AF			 **
9 AF			
12 AF		 x2  x3 	  x2
USAFWC			
ANG (ACC-gained)			
AFRC (ACC-gained)			

#### FY12 Ground

As of July 31, 2012

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

#### FY12 Weapons

As of July 31, 2012

	Class A	Class B
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

We have settled down following the usual springtime rise in aviation mishaps. In the past two months ACC has experienced only one Class A aviation mishap. The mishap was rate-producing and involved a B-1B flying through a thunderstorm, suffering severe hail damage. While already surpassing the total number of reportable Class A aviation mishaps from FY10 and FY11, we would like to end the FY on a positive note. Mishaps continue to show deficiencies in basic airmanship and emergency procedures. For these reasons, we encourage increased leadership presence and proactive supervision throughout all levels of flying operations.

### Ground Notes

As July ends we are two-thirds of the way through the Critical days of Summer (CDoS). The command has sustained four fatal mishaps during this period: two each PMV2 and Sports/Recreation (kayaking). This places us one more than the total for FY11 CDoS. Overall for FY12, there have been 11 Class A ground mishaps resulting in the deaths of 13 Airmen and the Permanent Total Disability of another. Of the 11 mishaps, seven involved contributing factors, which if eliminated may have alleviated these mishaps. Four mishaps had Blood Alcohol Concentrations (BACs) well above the legal limit; four involved excessive speed and two involved the non-use of Personal Protective Equipment. Bottom-line: Discipline or lack thereof was the cause of the mishaps and the deaths that resulted.

### Weapons Notes

The weapons safety community continues to experience great stats and we thank you all for a job well done! However, we need to continue to try and minimize explosive-related mishaps in ACC. For the months of June and July we experienced three mishaps. There were two Class D and one Class E mishaps. One of the three mishaps was human factor-related and the other two were technical order (TO) violations. All three mishaps could easily be classified as human error being that choices were made by the individuals to not follow TO procedures. Let us get back to the basics by using the "Buddy" system. Have your peers, coworkers or supervisor check your work if something is in question. It does not hurt to double check your own work for accuracy. Mishaps will lead to personnel injury or fatalities, equipment damage, and a waste of our Air Force dollars. Slow down and think about the task at hand. Think safety at all times while performing explosive operations. Continue to strive for zero mishaps and a completely safe work environment for all!

### Symbols for Mishap Aircraft







**In This  
Issue**

Baptism By  
Fire **PAGE 4**

They Broke Rule  
Number 4 **PAGE 8**

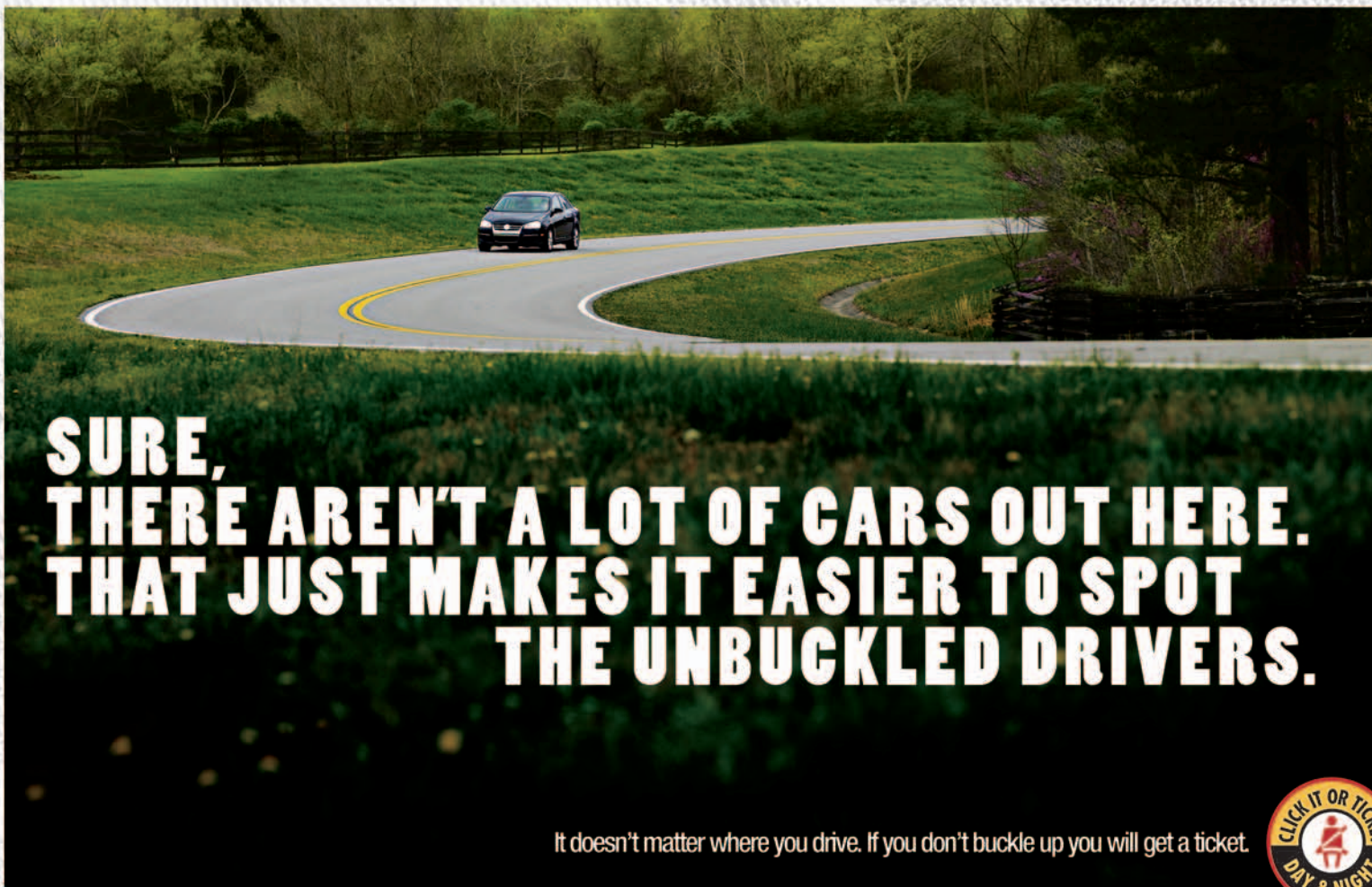
Mirror, Mirror  
on the wall **PAGE 12**

# OVER the Edge MAGAZINE



**MIRROR  
MIRROR**  
**on the wall**  
Who's the fairest of them all?





- 4 | BAPTISM BY FIRE**  
*by Airman 1st Class Tom Brading,  
Joint Base Charleston, S.C.*
- 8 | THEY BROKE RULE No. 4**  
*by Lt. Col. Judd Fancher,  
ACC/SEF, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.*
- 12 | MIRROR, MIRROR**  
*by Master Sgt. Duncan C. Munro, (ret.)  
Hurlburt Field, Fla.*

**HAS FADED MARKER  
ON HIS FACE FROM  
LAST NIGHT'S  
BLACK-OUT  
AND DRUNK-SHAMING.**

**MAKES PEOPLE  
WONDER WHY  
THEY KEEP INVITING  
HIM TO PARTIES.**

**COMPETES WITH  
THE BIRTHDAY GIRL  
FOR EVERYONE'S  
ATTENTION.**

**THINKS EVERYTHING  
AND EVERYONE IS  
"AWESOME"  
AND KEEPS  
SHOUTING IT.**

# WARNING

**BEWARE OF: THAT  
LIFE OF THE PARTY  
GUY**

**LAST SEEN:  
DROOLING LIKE A  
BULLDOG AND SWEATING  
UNCONTROLLABLY AS  
HE WORKS THE ROOM.**

**LOUD, DRUNK AND  
OBNOXIOUS IS NO WAY  
TO MAKE FRIENDS**

To protect yourself, **VISIT [WWW.THATGUY.COM](http://WWW.THATGUY.COM)**



## FACT

❗ One out of four fatal victims of smoking-material fires is not the smoker whose cigarette started the fire.

# Baptism By Fire

**Airman battles 63,000 gallons of burning jet fuel—  
receives medal for heroism**

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS TOM BRADING

**1**st Lt. Nicholas Mercurio, from the 1st Combat Camera Squadron, didn't set out to receive the Air Force Achievement Medal with Valor while deployed with Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunar. But because of circumstances he experienced, the first lieutenant earned the medal because he went "above and beyond."

"My hope was that I could just go out there and do my job," said Mercurio. His job was public affairs officer for the ongoing reconstruction mission in Kunar Province in Afghanistan. However, three weeks into his first deployment to the country, he was awakened to the sound of his roommate yelling, "We're under attack!"

At approximately 6 a.m., an insurgent fired a rocket-propelled grenade. The grenade scored a direct hit to a helicopter fuel bladder which was perched at a forward arming and refueling point overlooking the base. The refueling station was the site of armed vehicles, helicopters, rockets, ammunition and more than 60,000 gallons of jet fuel.





The station immediately burst into flames as black smoke and fire towered more than 1,000 feet into the air above. The western mountains were covered by the smoke hung over the forward operating base as twisted bits of metal and shrapnel rained down from the sky.

"It was baptism by fire," said Mercurio, in regards to his first experience with combat. "We trained and retrained both mentally and physically; however, you never know how you'll react until you're in that moment."

"A second RPG was fired into a building near us," said Mercurio. "It was so close our supply officer said it felt like it gave him a haircut."

When the fuel bladder was hit, the gas started slowly burning a path down the hill. As seconds passed, the slow-burning fuel became an ocean of gasoline, leaving a trail of fire in its wake and heading straight toward the

barracks housing the majority of service members stationed there.

Without any firefighting equipment, Mercurio, along with other service members, immediately took action to stop the fire. They started loading nearby sandbags into a pick-up truck and drove up to the fire to try to stop the blaze.

Sacrificing their own safety, they cut open bag after bag of sand, forcing the fire back uphill inch by inch. Adding to the danger was the .50 caliber ammunition and Hellfire missiles detonating due to the heat on top of the hill.

If that wasn't enough, there was another variable to overcome. Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, stocked with C-4 explosives, were parked on the flight line and engulfed in flames.

One of the MRAPs exploded in the midst of the chaos, flipping an officer backwards. The turret from the MRAP shot across the

flight line and Mercurio witnessed one of the doors from the vehicle shoot above his head.

An hour into the battle, firefighters from Asadabad, the capital city of Kunar, arrived at the scene in fire trucks.

"We took turns using the water hoses to fight the fire," said Mercurio. "Shoulder-to-shoulder, we fought the fire until it felt like we were going to hack out our lungs, then we'd trade with Afghan firefighters and they'd fight it, too."

Eventually, the team brought the extensive wall of flames under control and kept the fire away from any structures. The fire finally burned itself out.

Mercurio credits his actions to his instincts and the combat training provided to him during his time at Camp Atterbury, Ind., prior to deploying to Afghanistan. In addition, he credits the group of officers that assisted in fighting the fire with him.

Lt. Col. Aaron Burgstein, 1st Combat Camera commander, presented Mercurio with the Air Force Achievement Medal with Valor on Jan. 19.

According to the citation signed by Lt. Gen. David Goldfein, commander, U.S. Air Forces Central Command, the valor device was in recognition of Mercurio's heroic actions in direct contact by an enemy force and his courageous leadership in the face of grave danger. Mercurio was an example to his peers and directly impacted the command's ability to avoid a catastrophic loss of infrastructure, equipment and personnel.

"It's not about winning medals," said Mercurio. "It's about doing your job. Our job was to help the Afghan people and the better we do that job, the faster we won't be at war in Afghanistan." 🇺🇸

# FIRE PREVENTION WEEK STARTS OCTOBER 7TH 2012

While the reality of life in a combat zone can be unpredictable, life here at home is a bit more in our control. Take a moment and consider what you can do to limit the hazard of fire.

**CIGARETTES DON'T KNOW WHEN YOU ARE ASLEEP.**

**Smoking is the #1 cause of home fire deaths. If you smoke, put it out. All the way. Every time.**

For more information on how to prevent home fire, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov/smoking](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/smoking)

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

**FEMA**



# THEY BROKE RULE No.4

BY LT. COL. JUDD FANCHER

## Did You Know?

! Every year there are approximately 800 non-fatal hunting accidents reported and 100 fatal accidents.

Source: ihea.com

So there I was, 10 years old, on my first season of bird-hunting. My father and his friends hunted Grouse and Woodcock for years in southern and central Vermont; this was my first season joining them. The Eastern Ruffed Grouse makes its home throughout the Appalachian region of the northeastern US, preferring to live in the thorniest and most bramble-infested parts of the woods called "Coverts." The strategy we used hunting these birds involved assembling 3 to 8 hunters at one end of the covert, then walking line-abreast through the covert with about 25 yards between each hunter. Typically, we would add a flushing dog (we had a Black Lab) or a pointing dog (Brittany Spaniel) to the team, as the dog's nose excels at finding hidden birds we were about to walk past. When a Ruffed Grouse flushes, or takes flight, it does so in an explosion of noise and feathers. A grouse is a very challenging bird to shoot; quick to accelerate to flying speed, instinctively able to put trees and obstructions between itself and you. We typically dressed in bright colored clothing (with an orange hat or vest) and wore brush-chaps to deflect the thorns and brambles we would wade through all day.





All of that leads to the day of my story: a new shooter and hunter starting to learn the ways of a successful bird-hunter from my father and friends. Eight of us walked in a line about 150 yards wide through a covert on the side of a gentle ridge. A light screen of bushes/trees bisected our line as we hunted, so four shooters walked on the left side of the tree screen, and four shooters (including myself) walked on the right. My father frequently drilled good gun-safety habits into me as I grew up and learned to hunt. He had four simple rules of gun safety.

**Rule Number 1**  
Always treat a gun  
as loaded.

**Rule Number 2**  
Never let your gun  
point at anything  
you are not willing  
to destroy.

**Rule Number 3**  
Keep your finger  
off the trigger until  
ready to fire.

**Rule Number 4**  
Be sure of your  
target and what is  
beyond.

The last rule came into effect that fateful day. As we walked through the covert with half our group on either side of the line of screening bushes, a grouse flushed on the left side of the screen. The bird took-off forward, then quickly looped back to the right and flew through the screen and past the shooters on the right side of the bushes. The hunters on the left flank fired several shots, but they were unknowingly aimed "down the line" at the hunters on the right flank. Because of the screen of trees, the shooters on the left could not see the exact position of the other hunters on the right.

A fair amount of yelling ensued, as we discovered two hunters on the right had been shot.

## I was one of the two shooters hit

and after picking myself up off the ground, was a bit confused as to what had just happened. As we unloaded our shotguns and administered first-aid, we reconstructed what happened. The bird had flown out in front and looped back, so the closest shooter to the middle on the left flank had shot twice as the bird looped back to his right. Due to the heavy brush, he shot at the fleeting glimpses of the bird, without knowing the right flank of the line was in his line of fire. He shot at the bird not knowing his target and what was beyond. I received a pellet in my back and in my leg and another hunter took

five pellets in the left leg. Direct pressure stopped the bleeding and we loaded into the cars for a trip to the hospital.

The doctors x-rayed me and tried to fish the pellets out of my back and leg, but were unable to find them. I went home a bit sore, but with several valuable gun safety lessons from that day. My father's friend would not hunt for the rest of that year because of how he felt accidentally shooting his fellow hunters and friends. I forgave him knowing he made an honest mistake and we have been strong friends since. I certainly learned the importance of knowing one's target and what lies beyond. ✱





# MIRROR, MIRROR

**on the wall**

**Who's the fairest of them all?  
The one who lacks wisdom in haste  
Or the one who's smiling – teeth held with paste?**

**Mirror, Mirror on the wall  
Who's the prettiest of them all?  
Someday those stitches will go away  
But those facial scars will forever stay.**

**Mirror, Mirror on the wall,  
If I could do it over, that day I'd recall,  
And take a second to click my seatbelt on  
Now that face in the mirror I once knew is gone.**



## Did You Know?

! In ACC, during the past 3 years for every fatal motor vehicle mishap, there were an additional 20 motor vehicle mishaps resulting in non-fatal injuries.

BY MASTER SGT. (ret.) DUNCAN C. MUNRO

**T**ired of being told you will die if you don't use your seat belt? Maybe it's time we focus more on the reality of what happens to those who don't wear their seat belts, survive, and are "treated and released." My pre-military experiences as a paramedic taught me quickly that being released often meant those folks were actually leaving to have major dental or facial reconstruction done.

Let's face it; if you are reading this, you aren't dead yet – so we're unaware of the suffering that will be felt by our family, friends and coworkers. We have, however, made a trip or two to the dentist. We know all too well the exhilarating sound of a high-speed drill, not being able to feel our lips or jaw, and the trickling of water down our necks – all while trying to answer those

dentist's questions with a mouth full of instruments and hands. If you think having a tooth filled or a root canal is traumatic, imagine what kind of surgery is required to replace your teeth after they have been not so surgically removed by your steering wheel!

Here's a typical scenario. You just need to do a couple of short errands so you don't feel it is necessary to buckle up. You're at a stoplight and reach over to change the CD when WHAMMO – some idiot slams into the back of your car. The force of impact immediately sends you into the car in front of you. After your car stops, inertia keeps you moving forward until the steering wheel or windshield stops you – usually face first. You're pretty lucky because the impact wasn't enough to hurdle you through the windshield and onto the hood! Best of all, you're alive and "walk-away" with a few

missing teeth and some facial lacerations.

Most of us take the time each day to brush and floss our teeth, trying to reduce our trips to the dentist. So why can't we take a second or two to latch our seat belts? I know we all are concerned about our appearances. Some even worry that their seat belts will wrinkle their clothes. But will wrinkled clothes really matter if the alternative is having false teeth anchored into your jawbone or stitches across your face to piece it back together? People do die from not wearing their seat belts, but many more are injured in horrible ways. These injuries not only cost us manpower and dollars, they also result in long-term physical and psychological damage. Try not to become one of these statistics; wear your seat belt!