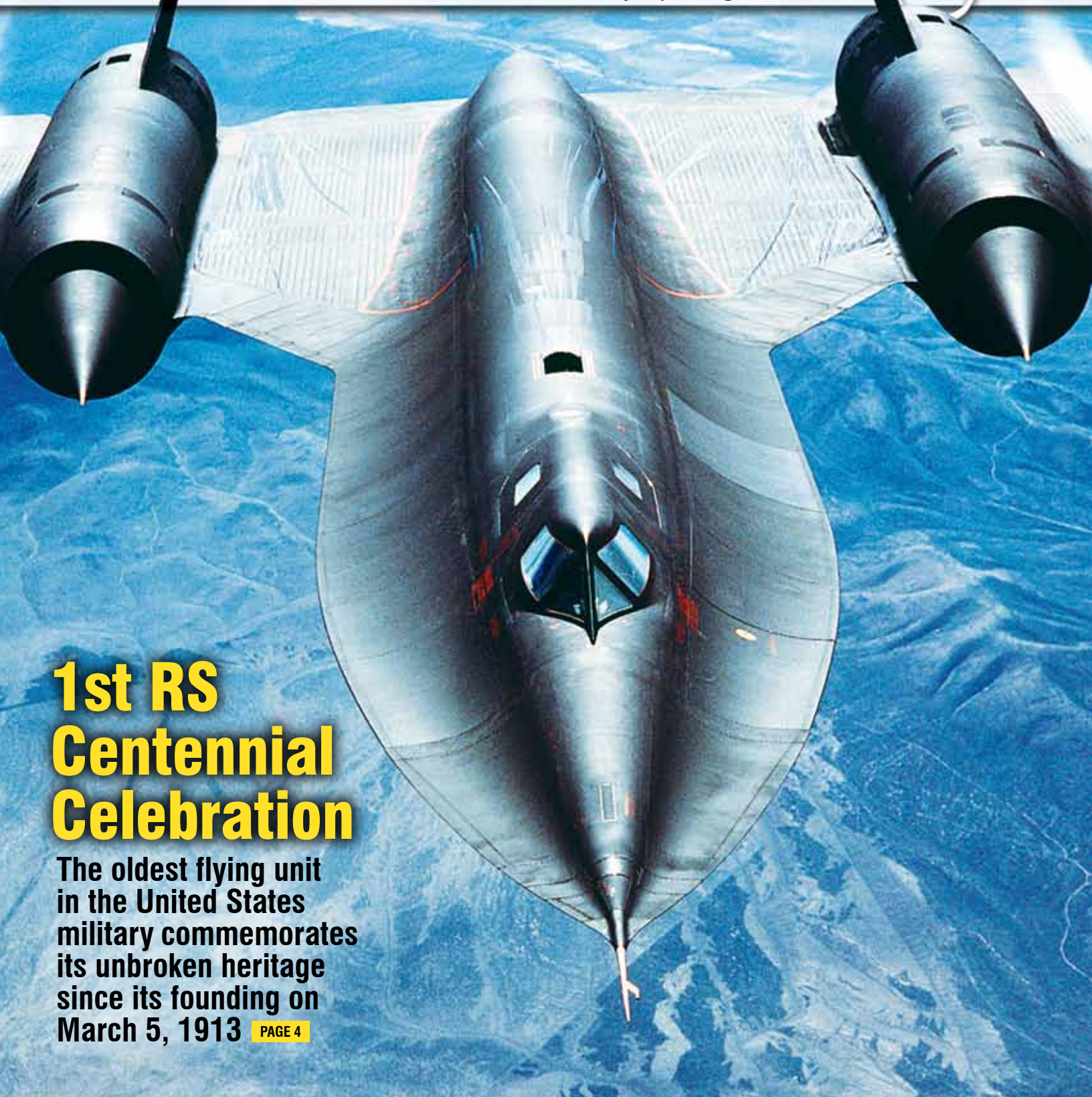


Summer Edition 2013

Combat Edge



Air Combat Command's Safety Magazine



1st RS Centennial Celebration

The oldest flying unit
in the United States
military commemorates
its unbroken heritage
since its founding on
March 5, 1913

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Congratulations



Author: Mrs. Kendra Marshall

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATORS BLUE PENCIL AND GOLD SCREEN AWARDS

Category – Article

Title of Entry – Chin Up, Shoulders Back, Wig On

Issue – Summer 2012

Award – 2nd Place

MARCOM CREATIVE AWARDS

Category – Writing/Feature Article

Title of Entry – Chin Up, Shoulders Back, Wig On

Issue – Summer 2012

Award – Gold

Combat Edge

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ACCent



A Strong Case for Safety

Tiered readiness? The Air Force at large and ACC specifically, has implemented a tiered readiness construct for the active duty force where only units preparing to deploy are trained and fully mission capable. The Air Force has never operated in a tiered readiness construct before because of the need to respond to any crisis within a matter of hours or days. This means that for the first time in Air Force history, “The nation is accepting the risk that combat airpower may not be ready to respond immediately to new contingencies as they occur.”¹ Although ACC leadership is preserving functions critical to wartime operations as well as the safety of life and property, we must realize that we are operating in an environment of elevated risks. ACC Safety recently surveyed 128 safety professionals at the numbered Air Force, wing and squadron level about risks associated with budgetary cuts and this is what they said:

- 72% felt cuts would increase operational risks at their base
- 62% felt they could identify specific operational risks that would increase due to cuts
- 73% of rated respondents felt cuts may lead to a flight mishap at their base

Most frequently identified risks included:

- Cuts to flying hour programs
- Cuts to training programs

The top concerns of Safety professions were:

- Airmen cutting corners in an effort to continue to accomplish the mission
- Aircrews pressing on available sorties to make up for less flying time

Although these responses are troubling, the good news is that the top concerns cited by our safety professionals can be alleviated by engaged leadership, a commitment to compliance and discipline, and a culture of risk management. And in a constrained budgetary environment, leadership, compliance, discipline and risk management are the most affordable tools we have to prevent mishaps. This is where a strong case for safety must be made. Safety is a commander's program, but leaders at all levels are fundamental to safe operations. Time and time again we have seen that compliance with technical orders and self discipline are directly related to safety. When Airmen ignore guidance or behave in an undisciplined manner, things get broken and people get hurt. That is why leaders need to ensure compliance and discipline while safety professionals need to be out and about identifying hazards, assessing risks and recommending mitigation strategies. Once leaders know the risks and choose sound mitigation strategies, Airmen can implement those strategies while leaders and safety professionals monitor progress. In this way, risk management can help us avoid preventable mishaps all while living safely within smaller budgets. However, we should avoid allowing budgetary concerns tempt us into cutting corners on safety. Cutting corners on safety is a lot like jumping off a 10-story building. The first nine floors seem like a pretty nice ride without much cost, but that bottom floor impact can be catastrophic. We cannot allow our tried and true safety processes to deteriorate right when our risks are elevated most. In an environment of elevated risks, we need heightened emphasis on safety and a commitment to compliance and discipline. We can't allow less flying time to press us into flying less safely when we do fly. All of this will take hard work and a commitment to our proven mishap prevention strategies. In the end, we can operate safely in a tiered readiness construct when we convince Airmen that it can be done by articulating a strong case for safety.



Col. J. Alan Marshall, Ph.D.
Director of Safety

100 Years of Military Flying Heritage



Photo by: Mr. John M Schwab

BY THE COMBAT EDGE STAFF

An international terrorist group crosses a border to attack an American city and then retreats into the safety of the wilderness in their home country. State-of-the-art U.S. reconnaissance aircraft patrol the skies in search of the terrorists passing critical information to coalition ground forces as they plunge deep into hostile territory. Airpower provides the mobility and flexibility to radically change the way combat operations are performed and previously novel aircraft derided by traditional commanders and have become a fundamental part of the kill chain (Stewart, 2013). You may think we are talking about Al Qaeda, U-2s in Afghanistan, and remotely piloted aircraft (RPAs), but we are actually talking about Pancho Villa, the Mexican Punitive Expedition of 1916, and the Curtiss JN-3 aircraft. The really interesting aspect of this story is that Air Combat Command's 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, currently based at Beale Air Force Base, Calif. are/were key players in the search for both Al Qaeda and Pancho Villa's band (1st RS, 2013).

100 Years of
Military Flying Heritage



5 March 1913 - 5 March 2013
This site honors the men and women of the
1st Reconnaissance Squadron, the oldest flying
unit in the United States military, and
commemorates its unbroken heritage
since its founding on the
5th of March, 1913.

Pilots from the 1st RS play an important role in current operations in both the U-2 and RQ-4 Global Hawk. Pilots from the 1st Aero Squadron flew reconnaissance missions in support of General Pershing's pursuit of Pancho Villa's band in 1916. In fact, the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron is the oldest flying squadron in the U.S. military and the squadron just celebrated its 100-year anniversary on March 5, 2013.

After Pancho Villa's bandits performed a raid of Columbus, N.M. in early 1916, killing 17 Americans, the 1st AS was tasked to support Pershing's attempt to chase down the murderous Pancho Villa bandits. During the past century, the 1st has also participated in World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and Vietnam. Pilots from the 1st have also flown in Desert Storm, Operation Allied Force, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The 1st AS flew fighter/reconnaissance missions in five campaigns in World War I and the renamed 1st Bombardment Squadron flew high altitude precision bombing missions in B-17s and B-25s during World War II. During the early years of the Cold War, the 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron flew RB-29s and later the re-designated 1st Bombardment Squadron flew both conventional and atomic-capable B-29s (1st

RS, 2013). Starting in 1966 and throughout the Vietnam era, the 1st SRS began flying the SR-71 "Blackbird" based at Beale AFB. The Blackbird could fly more than 2,200 miles per hour at an altitude of more than 80,000 feet and from this vantage point, 1st SRS pilots collected critical intelligence for the planning of the attempted rescue of prisoners-of-war at the infamous Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam (1st RS, 2013).

After the retirement of the SR-71 in 1990, the squadron was named the 1st RS and served as the formal training unit for the venerable U-2 aircraft. The U-2 had its first flight in 1955 and has flown in every major conflict since. The single engine state-of-the-art reconnaissance aircraft is flown by a single pilot and flies above 70,000 feet while surveying the battlefield for critical intelligence. In addition to the U-2, the 1st started flying the RQ-4 Global Hawk in 2008 and pilots and operators from both aircraft deploy overseas for current operations on a regular basis. The 1st RS has served the nation for over a century now and has flown several different aircraft, in several different venues garnering 20 outstanding unit awards (including one Combat V device, 1973). The Squadron has also earned three

campaign streamers (Mexico, 1917; WWI, 1918; WWII, 1945), and received the Meritorious Unit Citation (2011), the Presidential Unit Citation (1968) and the Distinguished Unit Citation (1945, 1st RS, 2013).

At the recent 1st Squadron's 100th Anniversary ceremony, Lt. Col. Stephen Rodriguez, the current 1st RS commander said, "We stand on the shoulders of giants here as we continue the proud tradition of providing [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] to war fighters" (Nickel, 2013). Another speaker, Maj. Gen. Patrick Holloman said, "The U-2 and SR-71 are the biggest long-term contributors to the 1st," he also said, "Those two airplanes made tremendous contributions to history, and I am proud to have been part of this outfit" (Nickel, 2013). The ceremony ended with the dedication of a plaque with the inscription "This site honors the men and women of the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, the oldest flying unit in the United States military, and commemorates its unbroken heritage since its founding on March 5, 1913." ACC Safety congratulates the 1st RS in its recent centennial anniversary and for a job well done!

Note: Col. J. Alan Marshall, ACC Director of Safety is a former 1st RS Director of Operations and Interim Squadron Commander.

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A RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle prepares to land at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., Jan. 25, 2013. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Mr. John Schwab)



A Salmson 2A2 from WWI, most likely over France where it served with the 1st in 1918. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

Curtiss O-1B Falcons from the 1st Observation Squadron, timestamped Feb. 2, 1935. (U.S. Air Force Photo)



A B-29-70-BW "The Spearhead" Superfortress in WWII from the 1st Bombardment Squadron in 1945. (U.S. Air Force Photo)



*“Reaper 01, Sandman,
that’s our trigger,
standby for nine-line ...”*

VIRTUAL ADRENALINE

Remotely-Piloted Combat and
One of its Potential Risks

REVISITED

BY 432ND WING OPERATIONAL PHYSIOLOGIST and PSYCHOLOGIST

4 | <https://afkm.wpafb.af.mil/CombatEdge>

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At the conclusion of the WWII, General Henry “Hap” Arnold stated, “We have just won a war with a lot of heroes flying around in planes. The next war may be fought by airplanes with no men in them at all ... take everything you’ve learned about aviation in war, throw it out of the window, and let’s go to work on tomorrow’s aviation, it will be different from anything the world has ever seen” (www.history.net). General Arnold’s assessment was correct; the world hasn’t seen aviation the way the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) community delivers it. Yet, alongside this new and exciting

technology are new and unique challenges. Despite being “unmanned,” human beings are still very much in the equation, bringing with them a host of human factors (HF) challenges. This sentiment is echoed in a study by Tvaryanas and Thompson (2006), which suggests the validity of previous HF data may be called into question when technology changes rapidly or new and radical designs are introduced as with the advent of unmanned aircraft systems (UASs).

In response to the growing RPA human factors threat, Lt. Col. Tal “Skid” Harris, a former RPA pilot and 432nd Wing Chief of Safety (COS), championed the hiring of an

Aerospace Physiologist and an Operational Psychologist at Creech Air Force Base. As the new Air Combat Command (ACC) RPA Flight Safety officer, Lt. Col. Harris later wrote:

“We need an Office of Primary Responsibility to deliver and orchestrate a process to address mixing wartime operations with peacetime life” ... and, “our Operational Psychologists could assess the situation, the studies and the resources available to develop a deliberate process” (Virtual Adrenaline, Combat Edge, Spring 2011, p. 8).

Acting on Lt. Col. Harris’ earlier recommendation, the 432nd Wing Commander created a team composed of

a Wing Operational Psychologist and a Human Factors Aerospace Physiologist resident in the Wing Safety office. As those two individuals, our orders were to redefine and retool traditional physiological and psychological support to meet the distinctive challenges facing the RPA enterprise. To us, with 30+ years of Air Force experience, a Ph.D., a PsyD, and years of physiology and psychology practice, the task seemed easy enough. We had had no idea.

432nd Wing Operational Physiologist, Major “Rev,” Ph.D.

As a physiologist with 2,500 hours as an aircrew member, I arrived ready to fix whatever the mission threw at me. However, I quickly realized how unprepared I was for the job. My first realization was I was not an “RPA guy”; I had no clue about the mission, and what I thought I knew was wrong. Alongside this realization was a more disconcerting truth; **I was a “manned guy,” and only saw things from a manned perspective.**

After meeting with the wing commander, I became overwhelmed at how much work it would be to re-learn aviation from an RPA perspective. Now, after completing RPA academics, three years of over-the-shoulder flights, and countless conversations with the best fatigue, human factors, and engineering experts, I’m finally comfortable identifying threats as an “RPA guy.” At first glance, these threats are not so different from the AF’s more traditional platforms (i.e. fatigue, stress, spatial disorientation (SDO), cognitive processing challenges, etc.). Yet, once the proverbial onion is peeled, each layer presents issues

not often seen in traditional aircraft. The most obvious of these threats is fatigue due to perpetual shift work.

Fatigue is a familiar term to the likes of security forces, firefighters, command post, etc. However, to aircrew, shift-work is typically reserved for deployments, readiness exercises, and alert. Not in the RPA community. Shift-work is a way of life; the average crew is accustomed to working 5-6 days straight with 2-3 days off, over three shifts, with no end in sight. Unlike other communities, most RPA fatigue issues are chronic rather than acute which require adequate recovery time to effectively treat.

For most RPA aircrew, recovery happens on the “weekend” which are not traditionally Saturday through Sunday, but rather whatever days they are off the schedule. This presents one of the toughest challenges for some in the RPA community—the choice between adequate recovery and spending time with family. Leadership in the RPA community is aware of this challenge and is utilizing tactics such as more flexible shift times and periods, slower transitions, strategic naps and rest breaks, and are now devising ways to give crews their choice of shift.



Photo by: 2nd Lt. Logan Clark

Due to an abnormally high reliance on focal-information, RPA pilots are forced to maintain lengthy periods of conscious attention to sustain general orientation and situational awareness. Conscious attention is especially vital during the landing and departure phases of flight. Yet, conscious attention, both for a short or long period of time, requires high mental workloads and can be exhausting. This type of exhaustion can lead to boredom and complacency, making crews vulnerable to visual misperception. Misperception during the landing phase is one of the leading causes in RPA mishaps.

The greatest challenge in RPA spatial awareness is limited field-of-view (FOV) and a lack of traditional motion and sensitivity cues. Depth perception, the ability of the brain to determine relative distance from visual cues, is compromised by any atmospheric conditions that interfere with light

transmission (Reinhart, 1996). This truth is even more compelling within the limited visibility parameters of most RPAs. Unlike other aircraft, RPAs like the MQ-1 Predator offer only a two dimensional picture from what are basically television screens. When these pictures

are obscured or distorted there are no other visual, physical or auditory cues by which RPA pilots can effectively orient themselves. Forthcoming RPA cockpits have incorporated panoramic systems that offer a greater FOV and a significantly better HF design base. However, with funding issues looming, it's necessary to employ a low-cost, easily fielded mitigation tool until the

new system is launched. The most historically effective tool is relevant and effective education, education that is RPA-centric. We are seeing strides in this area with a brand new RPA Instrument Refresher Course and RPA Physiology course.



Photo by: Mr. Dan Hawkins

432nd Wing Operational Psychologist, Major “Eddie,” PsyD

In late 2010, wing leadership created a psychology billet in order to better address the unique set of needs associated with the RPA community. Their desire was to hire a psychologist capable of being embedded in the organization and able to focus their skills and efforts on training, education, monitoring of personnel, mentorship, consultation and sustainment. In addition this individual would be able to provide specific, focused coaching, treatment and referrals when necessary. Personally, I had pursued additional training in aerospace psychology and had been seeking an opportunity like this for several years. I was grateful to be considered for the new position.

Once I arrived on station, I began attending RPA academics, getting to know the people, and the mission. Over the past two years I have learned a great deal from working alongside the pilots, sensors and mission intelligence coordinators (MICs). Through my interactions and observations, in close coordination with research conducted with the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine, I too have observed areas of risk, previously unidentified.

One key to understanding this community is recognizing the mission demands a 24/7/365 commitment. There are little to no down days, holidays, family days, or traditional weekends. Every day, the mission is job #1. From this standpoint, it's very similar to being deployed, except there's no finish line. Simultaneously, the RPA crews must navigate in a world that operates on a 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. schedule. Everyday RPA operators walk through their squadron doors mentally prepared for combat. At the end of their shift, they must “leave the gate behind them” and successfully transition home re-assuming the role of mom, dad, spouse, etc. Every day is a small-scale reintegration, requiring the operator to find a balance between supporting the war effort, administrative demands, and domestic responsibilities.

In 2011, we launched the RPA Human Performance Team (HPT). The HPT's (physiologist, psychologist, flight medicine) mission is to work seamlessly together, applying our knowledge and experience to enhance RPA crew human performance (HP), both personally and professionally. In 1997, then US JCS was quoted as saying, “The purpose of technology is to equip the man. We must never fall prey to the mistaken notion that technology can reduce warfare to simply manning equipment (Asken, 2010).” At the end of the day, our HPT believes the most sophisticated piece of war fighting equipment is the operator.

As a part of base orientation, all RPA aircrew are given an overview of current HP related issues. These issues are then reinforced in greater detail as part of their Combat Mission Ready training. In this training, we address the unique challenges of conducting remote combat ops and teach strategies known to promote mental fitness. Our goal is to incorporate the importance of a positive-proactive approach in order to maintain comprehensive fitness. Once operators are fully operational, we follow up and provide them with focused training on topics such as sleep hygiene, goal setting, energy management, enhanced focus and concentration, adrenaline management, and decompression strategies.

Our HPT also conducts spousal and family member outreach. There is a potential disconnect that family members may experience in regards to having a loved one drive off in to the desert each day to support a mission they cannot discuss. Several years ago, the key spouses began scheduling Spouses' Days, which typically include a visit to the base, a mission brief with the wing commander and an opportunity to see the aircraft and a GCS. The feedback received from these events has been extremely positive. We believe it is key to war fighter support and helps better inform families about the mission and respective challenges.



Photo by: Staff Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

The Way Ahead

Nearly everyone agrees the best strategy to combat RPA operator fatigue is to establish GCS locations in different time zones. This should eliminate the need for shift work. The technology exists, but would require triple the amount of GCSs and additional personnel.

In the interim, we believe it would be beneficial to establish schedules and conduct operations that are more consistent with a deployed versus non-deployed model. Perhaps this would involve three to four month cycles in which crews focus solely on the mission with built in “R&R” time at the end of each cycle. Think of it as akin to running a series of sprints with built in recovery time versus operating as though we are running an eternal marathon (Loehr and Schwartz, 2004). We believe there are multiple benefits to operating in this manner. It provides operators a set amount of time to focus on conducting operations followed by a “recovery” period where they could focus more on training, administrative issues, taking leave, etc. As with exercise, a period of recovery can enhance performance, alleviate fatigue, and counter burnout tendencies. From a psychological/ motivational standpoint, this could allow operators to see “light at the end of the tunnel,” something all of us who’ve been deployed can relate to. Lastly, this type of schedule would allow for increased opportunities to promote unit cohesion and decompression.

We are a long way from completely cracking the code in respect to RPA war fighter support; however, with the advent of RPA-centric risk mitigation tactics and HF education, we have made great strides. The RPA way of life is normalizing, the mission is maturing, aviators are gaining more experience, and RPA professionals are climbing the ranks. Our challenges are no worse than those who have gone before us however; in most instances we’re the first to experience them from an RPA perspective. As the brainchildren of a former chief of safety, we have begun tackling the unique challenges and laying the groundwork for those who will come behind us. The sky is the limit with what this community can accomplish and we are proud to have the opportunity to serve in a community that is intimately involved with the fight, and are providing a decisive tactical advantage on the battlefield.

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DEPLOYMENT PREPARATION

STARTS NOW



Photo by: Airman 1st Class Sam Taylor

BY MR. GARY S. RUDMAN

Shaw AFB, S.C.—It's Thursday at 4:15 p.m. The squadron just received a short-notice tasking for a safety professional to deploy to an air expeditionary wing in Afghanistan. The reporting date is in 18 days.

How could this happen? Who do I contact? How can I prepare? Tick tock, tick tock ...

How could this happen? Reclamas. While the reclama rate for safety professionals has

improved significantly, there is much more we can do. The Air Force uses the Air Expeditionary Force Reporting Tool (ART) to assign safety professionals to varied positions at deployed bases. However, the data in ART isn't always accurate. It's not uncommon to have a member described as "green" or good-to-go for a deployment only to find out that the member is in 5-level upgrade training or on a medical-limiting profile. So, how can accurate information be communicated to

ensure there isn't a safety reclama? Leadership involvement ensures the most current information is available and reduces the possibility of someone getting a short-notice deployment.

The clock is still ticking. When will my currencies expire? What about my check ride? Is my ancillary training up to date? As soon as the short-notice tasking is received, the member enters "go-mode." There's a lot to do and learn, with little time to accomplish the required training.

Preparation is key. A call to the U.S. Air Forces Central Safety Office can help make your short preparation time effective. The office manages air expeditionary wing and group safety programs spread across 15,000 nautical miles in support of 22,000 people and more than \$900 billion in assets. Through an eyes-on focus at all AEWs and AEGs, the USAFCENT safety team can guide the deploying member in preparation for a successful deployment.

Next? Training ... what courses are needed and is there time to get them? If you haven't already attended the Board President's Course, you probably will not have time for a temporary duty now. Bottom line: Don't wait for a deployment tasking to schedule training. Determine what safety training you'll benefit from now; talk with your wing safety office and schedule training now.

Visit public health to ensure your immunizations are current. Read the USAFCENT Supplement to Air

Force Pamphlet 91-202, The U.S. Air Force Mishap Prevention Program, located on the Air Force Safety Center's publications page, and Air Force Pamphlet 91-216, USAF Safety Deployment and Contingency Pamphlet. Obtain mobility gear and get current in your primary weapon. Finally, if you're the home station chief of safety, make sure there's a plan to keep the office running smoothly while you're deployed. Remember, there are no backfills for the home station safety office.



Photo by: Staff Sgt. Sara Csurilla

Fast forward 18 days. The Boeing 767 is nearing touchdown at your deployed location. What is my game plan? What should I do first? First thing ... go everywhere, see everything and meet everybody. Every AEW and AEG has an end-of-tour report. Use that for your starting point to glean strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need improvement. Realize you can't fix everything during your tour, but you might be able to complete a few selected items.

Schedule an appointment with the AEW or AEG commander to discuss critical items like commander priorities and battle rhythm. Talk about the mishap response plan. Don't assume all mishaps will be aviation-related. Determine if you'll be able to fly and at what frequency.

Work with civil engineering readiness to develop a major accident response exercise (MARE). A real-world incident is often the first time a new staff has to work together. A MARE allows key leadership to know and understand others' roles to ensure success.

The fire hose is now in full effect. How long is a typical workday? Be prepared for longer hours than a typical workday at home station. Where is my office? The answer is 'everywhere'. You can't execute a wing safety program from only a computer. Remember ... go everywhere, see everything, meet everybody. Find out what's different ... fire danger, infrastructure, flight line driving issues, explosive storage and confined space programs. How much risk is accepted? What risks are still out there? How can I dive deep to mitigate future risks?

Consider the aviation mishaps from a single deployed rotation at one AEW—nine Class As and Class Bs. Those are the big ones. Don't forget 25 Class Cs and countless Hazardous Air Traffic Reports (HATRs) and Bird-Wildlife Strike Hazard Reports (BASH). And, there are no more than two flight safety officers at an air expeditionary wing to investigate the HATR/BASH incidents.



Photo by: Airman 1st Class Tabatha Duarte

What about interim safety boards? Imagine an aircraft just landed gear-up on your single runway. How long will it take to get the runway open? What will the ISB need to do to preserve evidence? How long will it take to select a permanent SIB and when will those members arrive? It may take a week or more for the SIB to arrive, so be prepared to take control. What are the critical factors? In this case, it's single-runway operations. When can we resume operations? When will we move the aircraft? Are airbags available? Is there a crane? Is this reflected in the wing's mishap response plan? Tick ... tock ...

What is your safety discipline? Ground safety? Do you know flight and weapons? If the answer is

"No," it's time to learn! Are you a flight safety officer? Can you speak Weapons 101? Do you know these acronyms: IBD, PTR and IMD? Have you looked at a weapons site plan? What if you need to present this critical information to the commander? You could very well be the chief of safety. You're expected to know.

Get ready ... NOW! The better you're educated, the better you will perform in the deployed environment. Don't wait for the tasking.

Contact the USAF CENT Safety Office at 803-895-3179, DSN 965-3179, or by email at: 9afse.orgbox@afcent.af.mil), for an overview of deployed safety position duties and contact information for deployed base safety offices. ■



Photo by: Staff Sgt. Jennie Chamberlin

AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

Aircrew Safety



CREW OF BOGUE 05, 343 RS, OFFUTT AFB NE. The crew of Bogue 05 (RC-135W) showed great skill and ingenuity at the most critical point of their grueling 12.7 hour ISR mission. Upon RTB, they encountered 600-ft overcast ceilings with less than 2-SM visibility. Their relentless attention to detail and outstanding CRM prevented a potential landing mishap from an unstable approach after breaking out of the weather 2/3 NM short of the runway, enabling the safe recovery of a \$178M LD/HD asset and its crew of 31. *(Awarded Feb. 2013)*

MAJs. NATHANAEL TOLLE, MIKE ANDERSON, AND PAT HUDSON, 9 RW, BEALE AFB CA. The sortie was planned as a U-2 pilot proficiency sortie for Maj. Tolle to accomplish instrument approaches, simulated engine flameout patterns as well as normal and no flap patterns for landing. Approximately 20 minutes into the sortie, he experienced runaway trim during a no-flap touch-and-go; a boldface item and dire emergency. Maj. Hudson initiated radio contact with Maj. Tolle to assess the situation. After completing checklist items, Maj. Anderson recommended the pilot keep trim power off, assess controllability, and declare an emergency and full stop. Maj. Anderson initiated altitude calls to the pilot. The full-stop landing was uneventful; the U-2S was safely recovered. *(Awarded Mar. 2013)*

CREW OF BAJA 42, 41 RQS, MOODY AFB GA. After BAJA 41's final insertion of the PJ team, BAJA 42 maneuvered to execute the team's recovery via two 40 ft hoists. Midway through the first recovery, BAJA 42's hoist suddenly jammed. Two PJs dangled perilously from the cable, 40 ft above the water, and 3 ft from the bottom of the helicopter. The pilots fought salt-spray and winds, maintaining a stable hover while special mission aviators in the cabin swept into action, working the failed hoist and coordinating with the pilots for precise adjustments to the hover over 5-6 ft swells. BAJA 42's crew determined the hoist was incapable of being retracted. The pilot then descended within 15 feet of the rough seas lowering two PJs into the water where they were covered with a 15 foot rope ladder. *(Awarded Apr. 2013)*

Crew Chief Safety



STAFF SGT. THOMAS J. FEENSTRA, 379 EAMX, AL UDEID AB, QATAR. Sgt. Feenstra was supervising the refueling operations of a B-1B bomber loaded with live munitions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, when he noted a continuous fuel leak from the cooling loop bypass valve in the right main wheel well. He shut down the fueling operations, disconnected the fuel truck, cleared the area of vehicles, and performed emergency shutdown procedures of the auxiliary power unit. Fuel cell technicians were tasked to perform a manual shut-off; however, the shut-off lever broke and fuel continued to spew from the busted component. His leadership was pivotal to averting a catastrophic mishap and loss of vital combat assets or injury to personnel. *(Awarded Apr. 2013)*

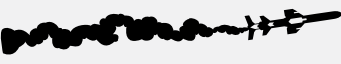
Ground Safety



TECH. SGT. CHRISTINA CHOMINA, 9 SFS, BEALE AFB CA. Beale was hit with the worst flash flooding in over 20 years; the rain overfilled the drainage systems and the 50 plus knot winds caused power outages throughout housing. Sgt. Chomina responded to a downed power line and expertly directed her forces around the affected area to establish a safe cordon. She closed the gates to ensure people wouldn't get caught in washouts off base just outside the gates and prevented untold injuries or death to personnel trying to leave during this dangerous time. This incident passed with no injuries or deaths; great credit goes to Sgt. Chomina for her actions during this crisis. *(Awarded Feb. 2013)*

SENIOR AIRMAN ROBERT C. MOSES AND AIRMAN 1ST CLASS LYNDON A. STEVENSON, JR., 455 EMXS, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. When Amn Moses noticed a trash dumpster billowing smoke near the entrance to the (ASP) Ammunition Supply Point he investigated the source of the smoke and directed Amn Stevenson to man a fire extinguisher in the event of a fire ignition. He then notified Munitions Control to initiate the emergency action checklist for a fire in the ASP. Amn Stevenson valiantly fought the fire that had broken out and Amn Moses redirected vehicle traffic away from the dumpster, diverting a potentially catastrophic situation involving nearby explosive-laden vehicles. *(Awarded Mar. 2013)*

Weapons Safety



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CHRISTOPHER T. TIPTON, 451 EMXS, KANDAHAR AF, AFGHANISTAN. Amn Tipton is responsible for the safe and expeditious transport of munitions for a multitude of weapon platforms including F-16, C-17, AC/C-130, R/MC-12, MQ-1, and MQ-9 aircraft. He observed a massive unscheduled construction project that directly interfered with the Main and Sierra Ramp ECPs from Tropical Lightning Drive. These ECPs are the approved primary/secondary munitions explosive routes utilized to supply alert aircraft with munitions. His decisive actions, ensured combat capability was uninterrupted and the safety of both base inhabitants and weapons personnel transporting munitions remained intact. *(Awarded Feb. 2013)*

STAFF SGT. AARON C. UPDIKE, 49 MXG, HOLLOMAN AFB NM. Sgt. Updike's attention to detail identified an increasing negative trend in the number of worn and/or unserviceable quick release pins on multiple one step loading adapters used for munitions loading on the 49th WG's MQ-1, MQ-9 and F-22 aircraft. The pins mating the adapter to the bomb lift truck table were migrating out during munitions loading operations. His investigation resulted in the removal and replacement of seven pins. A new MXG policy has been implemented requiring all weapons standardization evaluators provide on-the-job training on the proper inspection and removal/installation of quick release pins during all load training events to eliminate possible future mishaps. *(Awarded Mar. 2013)*

STAFF SGT. LARRY HARDCASTLE III, 23 AMXS, MOODY AFB GA. Sgt. Hardcastle was dispatched to investigate the cause of an unsafe gun condition on an A-10C. During his inspection, he heard an unusually loud clicking noise. He immediately stopped the task to prevent further gun system damage. He identified the cause of the strange noise—a damaged fixed exit chute assembly, and discovered a broken tab on one of the 30mm ammunition conveyor elements. He quickly isolated the cause for the unsafe gun condition. Sgt. Hardcastle's adherence to tech data averted a potential catastrophic in-flight gun system failure, and saved the \$370K gun system from further damage. *(Awarded Apr. 2013)*

Flight Line Safety



MR. GEORGE E. GRAVES, 455 AEW, BAGRAM AB, AFGHANISTAN. Mr. Graves dispersed or depredated over 4,900 birds and mammals. At an airfield with 175 aircraft and 20,500 monthly aircraft movements, the 455 AEW logged only one bird strike this month, a 75 percent reduction from Jan 2011. His attention to detail and systematic approach identified five critical airfield hazards that attract wildlife. Based on his technical expertise and oversight, the 455th EOSS is in final stages of awarding a \$100K contract for airfield mowing, weed-eating, and herbicide application. *(Awarded Feb. 2013)*

STAFF SGT. CORY A. NIMZ, SENIOR AIRMAN MICHAEL L. PEARISON, AIRMEN 1ST CLASS DEVIN M. MCKEEVER AND YULERIK E. SORENSEN, 379 EMXS, AL UDEID AB, QATAR. Sgt. Nimz and Amn Pearison were performing aerospace ground equipment service inspections on the North Ramp. While driving on Lima taxiway, Amn Pearison smelled a burning order coming from an MA-3D air conditioner located within 10 feet of the EMXS fuel shop sunshade. Upon investigation, they discovered a red, glowing and sparking compressor clutch. Their keen attention-to-detail and immediate response averted a catastrophic mishap, saving lives and preserving critical combat capability. *(Awarded Mar. 2013)*

MASTER SGT. JANNELL MCGIVERN, 823 MXS, NELLIS AFB NV. The 823d MXS hangar and associated buildings lost power after a main generator failure, which subsequently caught fire. Sgt. McGivern noticed an odd noise associated with a burning smell coming from the main hangar generator area. She discovered two Air Force civil engineers requiring immediate medical attention; both victims appeared to be in shock and had suffered burns to their bodies and extremities. She rendered first-aid and buddy care, and called 911. Sgt. McGivern's quick actions ensured the area was safe for others to enter, helped the two injured Airmen, and prevented the potential for other injuries. *(Awarded Apr. 2013)*

Pilot Safety



CAPT. ROBERT D. BROWNING, 99 ERS, AL DHAFRA AF, UAE. Six and one-half hours into his U-2S sortie, at an altitude exceeding 60,000 feet, Capt. Browning observed the autopilot was having increasing difficulty when trying to roll the aircraft out of turns. He disengaged the autopilot and realized that the left wing was extraordinarily heavy, usually an indication of a significant fuel imbalance. To counter the fuel imbalance he initiated a transfer of fuel from the heavy left wing to the right side. Post-flight analysis determined the right-to-left fuel transfer pump relay had shorted out. Capt. Browning’s judgment and perseverance resulted in the safe recovery of a \$250M national asset. *(Awarded Feb. 2013)*

MAJ. BRANDON A. ZUERCHER, 325 FW, TYNDALL AFB FL. Maj Zuercher provided crucial leadership during a complex F-22 in-flight emergency. Weather was overcast with 400-foot ceilings, 2 miles of visibility and mist. On vectors after entering the weather, Maj Zuercher noticed his wingman fell off their Intra-Flight Data Link. This foretold a serious avionics problem: unable to fly instruments and unable to use the radio. While dodging the weather, he skillfully rejoined on the trailing aircraft, now low on fuel. Due to fuel and time constraints, Maj Zuercher directed Wasp 2 to close formation and commenced a formation ILS approach for a split to land. As they broke out of the weather passing 400 feet AGL, he directed Wasp 2 to land on the left runway, while he side-stepped to land on the right runway. Maj Zuercher’s exceptional systems knowledge, situational awareness, and skillful flying led to the safe recovery of two \$132M aircraft *(Awarded Mar. 2013)*

SQN. LDR. GUY A. LOCKWOOD, 94 FS, JB LANGLEY-EUSTIS VA. Sqn. Ldr. Lockwood, an exchange pilot from the British Royal Air Force, embarked as number two (Raptor 12) of two F-22s on an AOS planned mission from Kadena AB, Japan, to the 2013 Avalon International Air Show in Australia. Well into the transoceanic mission and with 500 miles remaining, he experienced a catastrophic and complex electrical failure that caused cascading system degradations. Excellent CRM skills were utilized to ensure the flight determined the most logical failure, accomplished multiple varying checklists perfectly, and determined the best course of action. Diligent checklist adherence, superb F-22 systems knowledge, and excellent airmanship prevented the loss of a \$150M combat asset. *(Awarded Apr. 2013)*

Unit Safety



34 BS, ELLSWORTH AFB SD. The 34th BS led the 28th OG and the B-1 community in implementing standardized procedures for the first operational B-1 hot pit refueling. The new procedures allow the B-1 to safely refuel on the ground without shutting down all four aircraft engines; revolutionizing training in the B-1. Traditionally, ERCC were utilized to maximize training on a given aircraft. However, this minimized the type and amount of training available to aircrew and subjected the a/c to increased airframe stress along with increased wear on the brakes and tires due to a higher required landing fuel loads. The 34th BS is already reaping the benefits of the additional sorties and improved training opportunities hot pit refueling offers. *(Awarded Feb. 2013)*

358 FS, DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB AZ. The 358th FS set the standard for tactical excellence during its deployment to Green Flag West 13-3 with a 100 percent safety record! Pre-deployment, the Lobos completed over 16 hours of group academics, 34 simulator sorties, and countless hours of intense preparation. This hard work resulted in the incident-free deployment of over 177 personnel and seven truckloads of cargo, including a Green Flag first, eight A-10C initial qualification students to Nellis AFB. Lobo excellence was demonstrated starting on day one, when 34 A-10 pilots scored a perfect 100 percent on the 549th CTS J PUB 3-09.3 test—a critical measure of a unit’s ability to safely and effectively employ during the simulated combat exercise. *(Awarded Mar. 2013)*

455 EOSS, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. The 455th EOSS Team improved airfield safety while providing Bagram organizations with 24/7 weather and Intel support. Their constant vigilance, enforcement of runway crossing procedures, and improved education programs halted the persistent AFCENT runway incursion trend. They created 5 threat assessments, identified increased threat periods, and provided timely force posture recommendations. Intel built 71 RBD products and synchronized TF 455 taskings, providing life-saving over watch to 163 OTW patrols. The team’s paramount focus on safety improved airfield operations, protected Airmen, and provided seamless support to Bagram Airpower. *(Awarded Apr. 2013)*

Flight Safety



STAFF SGT. JOHN M. TOROLA, 757 AMXS, NELLIS AFB NV. SSgt Torola displayed consistent safe flight maintenance awareness practices through dedication and meticulous attention to detail. In Dec, Sgt Torola, noticed the rudders on an F-15 were slightly offset to the right as the lead crew chief was about to marshal the aircraft forward. He quickly notified the marshal to hold the aircraft and verified the indication and directional alignment with the pilot. After investigation, it was determined that the aileron rudder interconnect (ARI) input push-pull outer cable in equipment bay 5 was bent, causing the inner cable to bind. Upon removal of the cable, technicians discovered the inner cable end had sheared. A Local One-Time Inspection (LOTI) was initiated for damaged or binding ARI input push pull cables on all F-15 aircraft. Based on this LOTI, two aircraft were found to have rusted rod ends on the ARI cable. SSgt Torola’s keen eye successfully averted a potential Class A or B mishap and ensured the safekeeping of a valuable government asset and life. Additionally, during this period, he noticed a fuel leak. Sgt Torola acted swiftly to stop the leak by hooking up an air cart to pressurize the system and averted a worse situation. His actions ensured that further damage was not sustained and the aircraft was able to fly the next sortie. SSgt Torola’s unfailing attention to detail was instrumental in the safe operations of 57 WG aircraft and personnel during this quarter.

Ground Safety



SENIOR AIRMAN ZACHARY S. HURST, 43 ECS, DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB AZ. Amn Hurst managed the squadron’s motorcycle safety program, created an improved motorcycle instruction binder for the commander and developed a comprehensive tracking program for the unit’s 21 motorcycle riders ensuring they reached the pinnacle of safety through the implementation of 47 motorcycle safety seminars. He coordinated with wing Safety and aided in the squadron’s application of an innovative digital flight safety incident reporting process, which improved mishap reporting by 40 percent. He also led the safety office during the absence of the OIC and NCOIC in December ‘12, while he concurrently performed nine inspections which mitigated eight safety discrepancies. Notably, he performed as a safety observer during a WIC ME sortie that provided critical EA support to eight ground units and aided in the execution of a high-priority training exercise leading to the graduation of 106 Weapons School students. SrA Hurst delivered a safety briefing prior to the winter holiday break to 141 personnel which ultimately led to zero mishaps reported during the period. He also conducted a squadron quarterly safety briefing, which fulfilled 5K CMR requirements for 134 aircrew and readied them for worldwide deployment. SrA Hurst organized storage and disposal procedures for 48 fluorescent lights and ensured 100 percent compliance with AF safety directives. He updated two safety boards located near the SOC desk in order to provide aircrews with the most up-to-date BASH and HATR information. He was instrumental in creating the 43 ECS Safety SharePoint website which provided a practical user-friendly interface to process common reports for documenting BASH and HATR incidents.

Weapons Safety



TECH. SGT. ERIK R. PETAU, 49 AMXS, HOLLOMAN AFB NM. During this period, TSgt Petau used his weapons safety background to assist the Weapons Safety Office in establishing a impulse cart storage facility in support of 18 F-16 aircraft on temporary assignment from Luke Air Force Base. He provided keen insight and coordinated the creation of an explosive safety local operating instruction. He also acquired all safety placards, fire extinguishers, and the storage locker while building a tracking sheet for daily operations. In addition, TSgt Petau was instrumental in the recovery of an F-22 during a hung gun emergency. He quickly dispatched a response crew, cordoned the immediate area and oversaw the safing of the aircraft and its quick return to the parking location. Furthermore, TSgt Petau’s keen-eye was pivotal in the identification of a fleet wide chafing issue on the F-22 Configurable Rail Launcher wiring harnesses. He immediately notified Quality Assurance, and a One Time Inspection was performed on 26 F-22 aircraft to repair the wiring harness, negating \$280K in damage to the weapons system and the possible inadvertent launch of AIM-9 L/M missiles.

Congratulations

2012 USAF and ACC ANNUAL SAFETY AWARD WINNERS

AF NUCLEAR SURETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

MSgt Thomas J. Erven
55 WG, Offutt AFB, Neb.

AF CHIEF OF SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR WEAPONS SAFETY

TSgt Anthony Moore
9 AF, Shaw AFB, S.C.

AERO CLUB SAFETY CERTIFICATE

Beale Aero Club
Beale AFB, Calif.

ACC COMMANDER'S AWARD FOR SAFETY

Twelfth Air Force
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

ACC WING SAFETY PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

455 AEW
Bagram AF, Afghanistan

ACC WING CHIEF OF SFETY OF THE YEAR

Lt Col Jefferson Hawkins
1 FW, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

ACC FLIGHT SAFETY OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Maj Matthew E. Hanson
355 FW, Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

ACC FLIGHT SAFETY NCO OF THE YEAR

TSgt Landon R. Peterson
49 WG, Holloman AFB, N.M.

ACC CREW CHIEF SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SSgt Ryan A. Niemiec
552 AMXS, Tinker AFB, Okla.

ACC FLIGHT LINE SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Maj Beau D. Miller
1 RS, Beale AFB, Calif.

ACC WEAPONS SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

MSgt Thomas J. Erven
55 WG, Offutt AFB, Neb.

ACC LOGISTICS SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SSgt Patrick J. Mackey
366 LRS, Mt. Home AFB, Idaho

ACC GROUND SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

TSgt Robert L. Brown
552 ACW, Tinker AFB, Okla.

ACC GROUND SAFETY SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

TSgt Anthony R. Altomare
9 AF, Shaw AFB, S.C.






ACC TRAFFIC SAFETY SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

366 FW
Mt. Home AFB, Idaho

Mishap Statistics Scoreboard



FY13 Flight

As of March 31, 2013

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

FY13 Ground

As of March 31, 2013

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

FY13 Weapons

As of March 31, 2013

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

Flight Notes

During the second quarter of FY 13 ACC was Class A flight mishap free. Budget and flying hour cuts for the remainder of FY 13 are ACC/SEF's main area of concern. Tiered readiness will bring with it significant flight safety challenges. Everyone's diligence across all aspects of flying will be needed to avoid increased mishap rates. We ask commanders and supervisors place increased emphasis on risk management and tech order compliance at all levels. Thanks for everyone's continued emphasis on fostering a positive safety culture across ACC flying units.

Ground Notes

The second quarter of FY 13 has been fairly quite. Undoubtedly, the outstanding mishap prevention efforts of all the Airmen in Air Combat Command have directly impacted the reduction of mishaps. Unfortunately, there were two Class A mishaps during the quarter. The first mishap resulted in the death of a 1st Lieutenant when he hit a tree skiing at a high rate of speed. The second Class A mishap was the result of a structure fire that resulted in over 20 million dollars worth of damage.

As we transition from spring into summer, the ops tempo tends to pick up—not only at work, but at home, as well. Fair weather lends us opportunities the other seasons do not. As a result, mishap numbers historically rise. Many of us will take advantage of the warmer weather by traveling, riding motorcycles, and participating in water sports and other outdoor activities—activities that, at first thought, do not invoke thoughts of “dangerous activities.” However, last year ACC alone lost five members doing those very things. Let's make this the safest summer ACC has ever had. With your help, it's possible!

Weapons Notes

Great job ACC weapons community for educating yourselves and others on mishap prevention. Safety awareness never stops! During the last quarter we have experienced one Class C, two Class Ds and seven Class E mishaps. Of the 10 mishaps, six were the direct result of complacency and not following technical order procedures. These types of mishaps may seem small in nature, but in the grand scheme of things could have resulted in traumatic outcomes. So let us continue to work hard on preventive measures to avoid potentially fatal mishaps. Please take your time and do it right the first time.

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

Symbols for Mishap Aircraft





**In This
Issue**

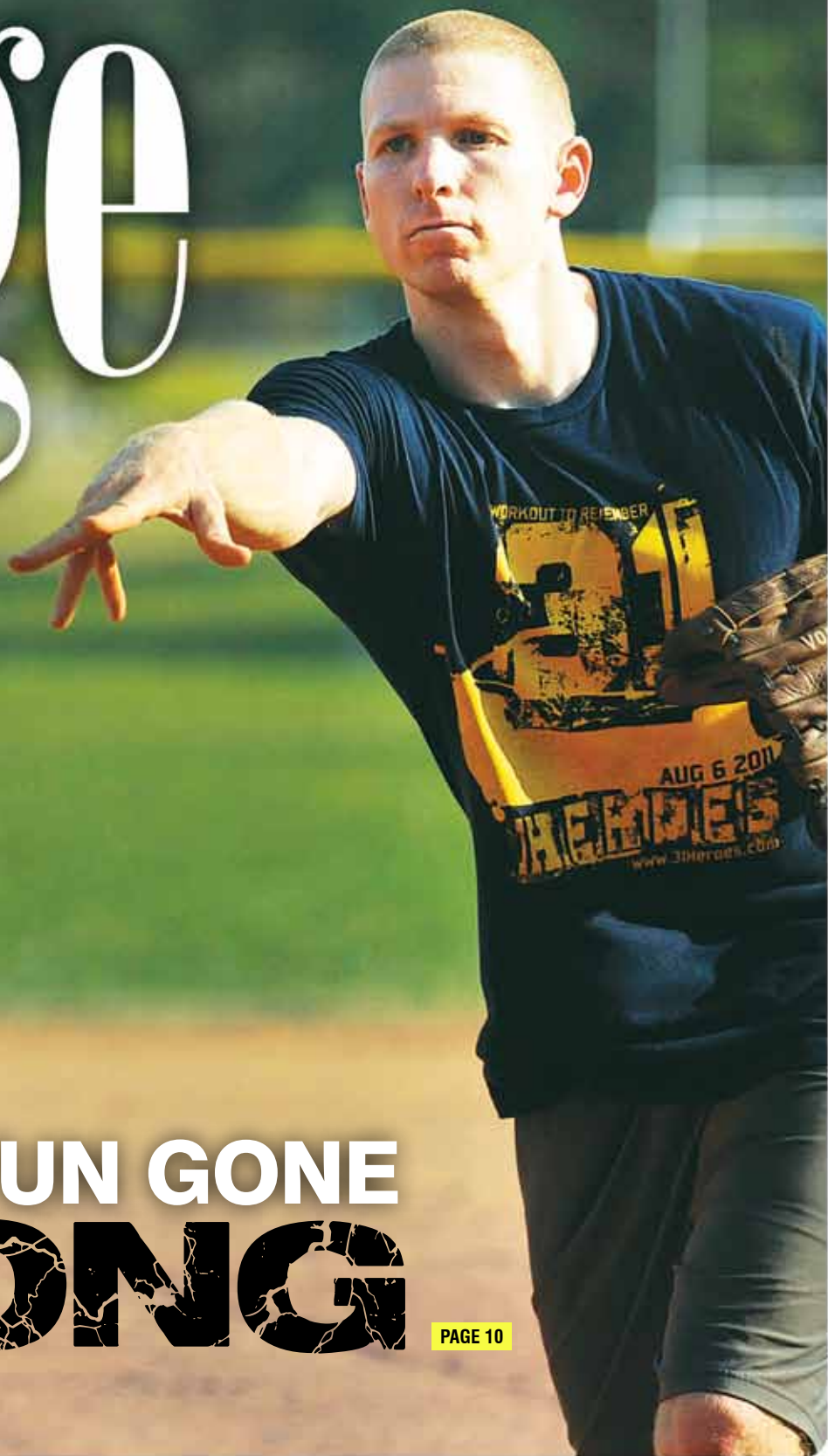
Are You A
Grill Master? **PAGE 4**

Evacuation vs.
Vacation **PAGE 6**

Could You
Swim A Mile? **PAGE 8**

OVER the Edge

MAGAZINE



SUMMER FUN GONE WRONG

PAGE 10

The Critical Days of Summer safety campaign will begin Friday, 24 May 2013 (Memorial Day weekend) and conclude Tuesday, 3 Sep 2013 (end of Labor Day weekend). This year's Air Force-wide theme for the campaign is **"Safe'n Sound—All Year Round"** and rightly so. Safety is a personal choice that has everlasting effects on family, friends, co-workers and the Air Force. Our goal for this campaign is zero preventable mishaps, and we must strive to do everything we can to achieve it. Last year in ACC we sustained five fatalities during the "Critical Days of Summer." Three of the five fatalities involved motorcycles, and the other two involved water activities.



OVER the Edge MAGAZINE

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4 FW, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.

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by Ms. Shamera Stewart
Newport News, Va.

8 | COULD YOU SWIM A MILE?
by Senior Master Sgt. Derrick Mitchell
HQ ACC/SEG, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

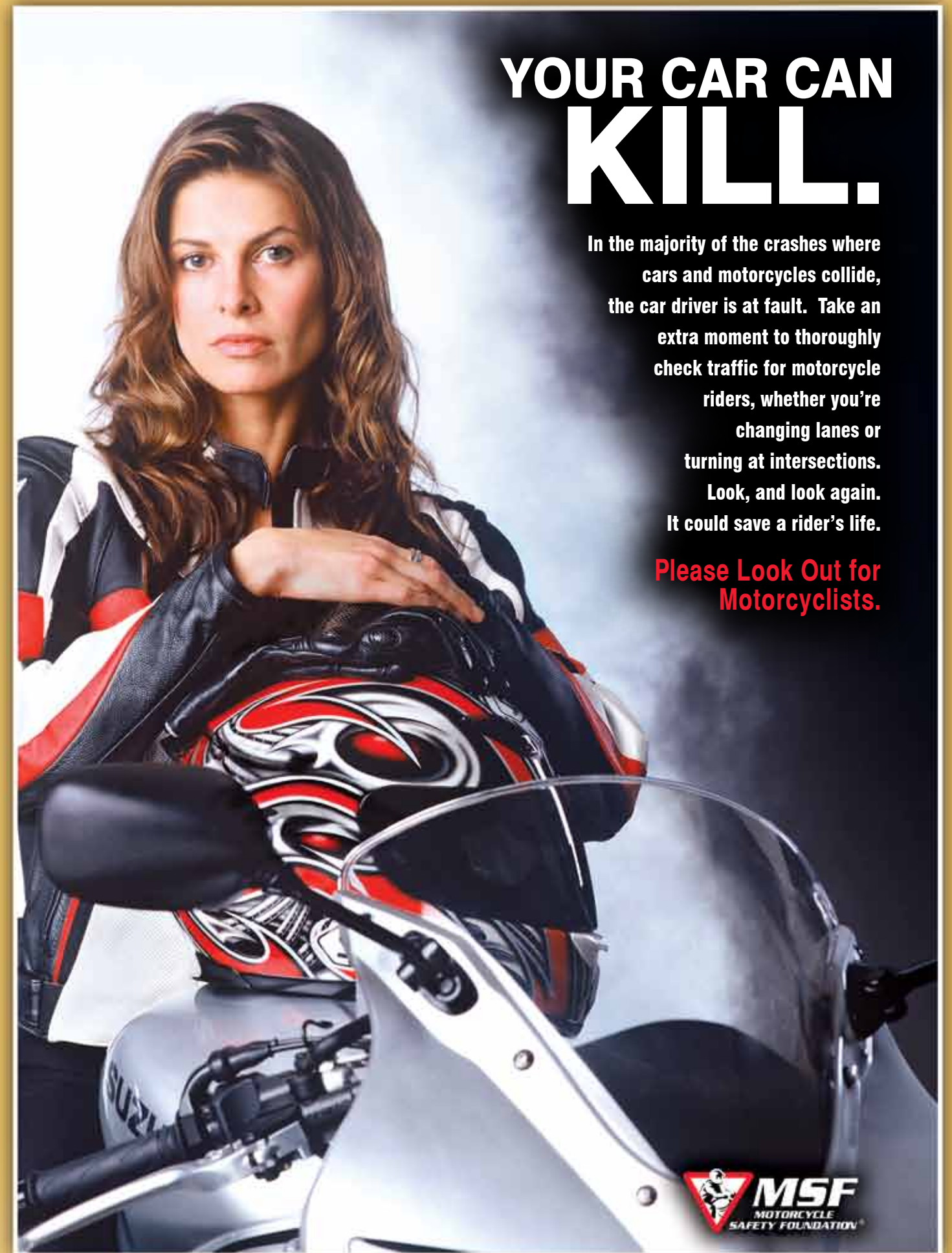
10 | SUMMER FUN GONE WRONG
by Mr. Rodney Robinson
HQ ACC/SEG, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va.

Cover Photo by: Airman 1st Class Rusty Frank

YOUR CAR CAN KILL.

In the majority of the crashes where cars and motorcycles collide, the car driver is at fault. Take an extra moment to thoroughly check traffic for motorcycle riders, whether you're changing lanes or turning at intersections. Look, and look again. It could save a rider's life.

Please Look Out for Motorcyclists.



are you a Grill Master?

BY STAFF SGT. LAWRENCE ROBINSON

You brag to all your friends that you are the grill master and no one on this side of the Mississippi has anything on your skills. The only reason you invite them over is to receive all the compliments afterwards to boost your ego. As a seasoned vet on the grill, you feel you have the art of barbecue mastered as if you were Picasso with a paint brush. You have always done things the same way and never had an incident.

You go out on your patio deck, pour some charcoal in, and spray half a can of lighter fluid just to make sure it heats up just the way you like it. Then you grab your grill lighter and pull the trigger. (Insert freak accident here) Somehow, you end up in the emergency room with severe burns and missing eyebrows. Or your house burned down and you and your family no longer have a place to call home

and everything you have worked so hard for is gone. How does this happen? You knew what you were doing. Well, at least that is what you thought. Grilling is one of the most preferred methods of cooking, especially in the spring and summer months. You must take all the appropriate precautions to avoid potential damage, injuries or even fatalities.

Once you set something on fire, your credentials as a grill master are revoked.

To guarantee this doesn't happen to you, follow the following tips to make your grilling experience as fun, delicious, and safe as it should be.

When using grills ensure they are a safe distance away from homes, garages,

trees or anything that could possible catch on fire. Never use grills indoors or in enclosed spaces as it can lead to the destruction of your home, or carbon monoxide poisoning. Even the smallest amount of carbon monoxide can lead to health problems or even death.

It is easy to become complacent and trust that the equipment you are using is always good to go. Be sure to inspect the entire set-up to include the grill, hoses, connections and other components. Any signs of broken parts rust or cracks should be repaired. If you do encounter problems with your gas grill, do not attempt quick fixes. Instead, replace parts as needed. Ensure your propane tank is in good condition.

When handling propane tanks use extreme caution. They are flammable. When propane tanks are not in use make sure they are completely closed. Do not disconnect a tank when the

grill is in use or is still hot. When you have propane tanks refilled, have them inspected for leaks, dents and rust. If you smell propane while operating your grill, turn it off immediately. Avoid smoking when handling propane gas tanks.

Never leave a grill unattended! Keep children and pets away from grills. They can receive serious burns just from touching the part or can even knock it over from playing around it. Also, make sure grills are not placed in high traffic areas.

Don't drink and grill! Excessive drinking while cooking can impair your decision making and divert your attention from your

cooking duties. Everyone likes to have a few drinks while barbecuing, just don't overdo it. Make sure you are aware of everything going on the entire time there is a hot grill in your control.

It is a good idea to have a multipurpose fire extinguisher available in case something happens. However, do not attempt to handle a fire that is out of your control. Call the local fire department immediately.

These are just a few tips you can use for your grilling experience. However, you should read the instructions manual for your grill. I know, I know; you don't need to read the instruction manual because you already

know what you are doing. Well, believe it or not, you might not know everything. There are cautions and warnings you should take heed to prior to using your grill. Even if you have read it before, read it again after long periods of not using your grill. There may be some things that you have forgotten about.

Barbecuing is one of the easiest and quickest ways to cook great tasting food. However, when done incorrectly, it can lead to major damage and injuries. Now, go ahead and fire up that grill, but do it safely and send me an invite. I'll bring the ice. 🍷



EVACUATION VS. VACATION

BY MS. SHAMERA STEWART

Hurricane season can be both very risky and a dangerous time of the year. Oftentimes, people are uncertain of how bad a storm can be until it actually hits. Unfortunately, many families aren't prepared for such storms and severe weather. My family and I had to learn this the hard way when we went on a small vacation and ignored the weather conditions. Even though it was a very frustrating experience, it was a lesson well learned!

Our vacation to Atlantic City, N.J., was planned ahead of time. The only factor we did not consider was the weather. Days prior to our departure, I saw various newscasts and weather reports about an upcoming storm approaching. "Irene," a Category 3 hurricane, was expected to travel up the Atlantic coastline. My parents and I debated on whether we should continue on with our plans. Eventually, we made the decision that we were

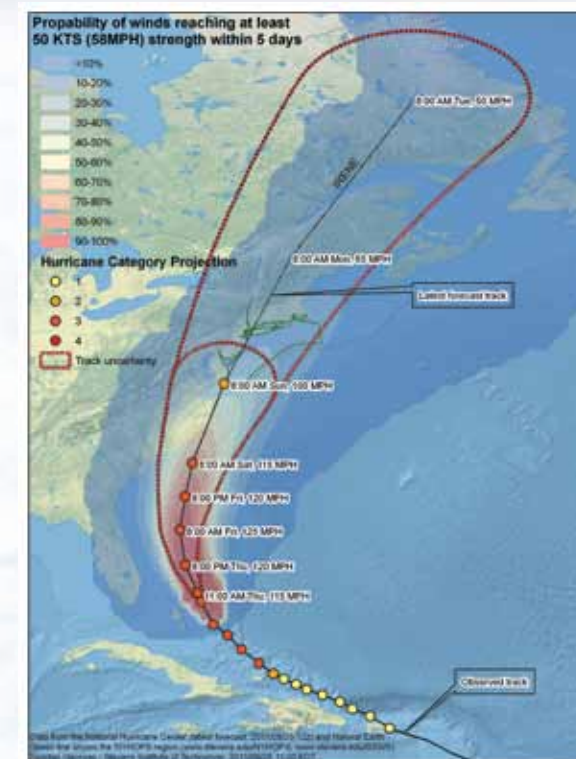
going to stick to our original plans and play the storm by ear. "Ha!" I thought to myself, "These kinds of storms always get over exaggerated by the media. This hurricane most likely will curve out and miss us completely."

It was amazing how wrong I was! Hours into our arrival in Atlantic City, the rain started to fall. At first we figured it was just your typical seasonal rain; however, it soon hit us that this storm was arriving faster than we had anticipated. Our day of sightseeing was cut short as we returned to our hotel to hear rumors saying the hurricane

was coming straight for Atlantic City! Later that night, those rumors were confirmed, resulting in an emergency evacuation of the whole tourist area! Unfortunately for us, we did not have a clear plan of action nor did we know what to do when faced with an evacuation. We couldn't go south because the storm was already there; we couldn't go north because the storm would hit there soon too. Instead we decided to travel westward, unsure of where exactly we were going. We settled in the town King of Prussia in Pa., and waited out the storm for a couple of days. Once Irene had passed, we headed back to Virginia.

As fate would have it, when we returned to Virginia, we were faced with a power outage. Fortunately, before things got too serious, the power returned to most of the city to put an end to a week that was definitely more stressful than relaxing!

Most would not consider our family vacation "fun." However, to this day, we are still counting our blessings. We were lucky enough to have plenty of food, water and



shelter. Nevertheless, we still should have had a backup plan in case of an emergency.

What can anyone learn from my story? Pay attention to the weather forecasts! If there are signs of severe weather, take them seriously and do not ignore them. Prepare for them the best way possible, even if you are uncertain of the severity of the storm. As many have said, "It's better to be safe than sorry." Take it from me—you don't want to be sorry!

Hurricane season takes place between June and November each year, with its peak being between mid-August and late-October. Here are a couple of things to consider when dealing with hurricanes:

- Build a hurricane emergency kit (this might include batteries, flashlights, radios, canned goods/non-perishables, and most importantly water)
- Discuss and practice a disaster plan with your family
- Learn community hurricane evacuation routes
- Do not disregard the warnings or watches; take them seriously (listen to radio or TV for info)
- In case of a hurricane, stay indoors away from windows/glass doors and take refuge in a small interior room, closet or hallway on the lowest level. 🌩️

A close-up, profile view of a man's face and shoulder. He is wearing a black swimming cap with a strap. His expression is focused, looking towards the right. The background is a blurred view of a body of water and a distant shoreline under a bright sky.

Could You Swim A Mile

... if your life depended on it ?

BY SENIOR MASTER SGT. DERRICK MITCHELL

There I was standing in front of Bob Eubanks on the Power Ball Game Show. My goal was to answer questions asked by Mr. Eubanks based on answers from the studio audience. Since I had moved from 10th place to fourth place in the standings I felt good about my chances of winning one million dollars. The audience was cheering me on and I was ready. All I had to do was answer one more question and it would have put me in the final round. The question was "Could you swim a mile if your life depended on it?"

I am no great swimmer but in my mind I felt that I could swim one mile if my life depended on it. So I went into deep thought as the audience screamed yes and no. I came to my conclusion, betted on myself and answered the question yes. The answer was no and I didn't win the million dollars. All I had to do was take a step back and think about a swimming race with my cousin when we were 14-years old. I remember it like it was yesterday. He challenged me to a two lap race in the pool. We asked the lifeguard on-duty if he would allow us to race at the break and he said yes. The race started and we completed the first lap. I was gassed but I continued to swim. All of a sudden I heard a whistle and saw two additional bodies enter the water. The two bodies were life guards and they rescued my cousin. I got out of the pool as instructed and went to check on him. He was scared but okay. We both learned a big lesson that day. Never exceed your swimming ability.

It's so easy to get caught up in the moment or group-think that you can lose your focus on the hazards in front of you. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list lack of swimming ability as one of the factors that influence drownings. If I had blocked the audience out, I would have remembered that the questions were based on studio audience survey and thought about the race when I was 14. While participating in water activities this summer don't exceed your swimming ability ... ***your life just might depend on it!***

SUMMER FUN GONE WRONG



BY MR. RODNEY ROBINSON

Back in the day I did a lot of things that would cause me to shake my head today. At the time they seemed like the thing to do. I never really gave much thought to the consequence of my actions nor at the time did I really care. I could tell you a thousand stories in my life that seemed like a no brainer, but after time, I would think otherwise.

What should have been a great day of playing softball turned into a day I would never forget. I was pretty active as a young Airman always doing something. I really enjoyed playing softball although I was just an average player. I certainly thought I was better than I really was ... my next step was the pros you know. I was stationed at Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, and played on the squadron softball team. This particular weekend was a tournament on base, and I was looking forward to it all week. We started playing games on Friday and continued on Saturday. We won the first three games and proceeded to the final game in the winner's bracket.



Photo by: Mr. Jeff W. Gates

I was playing centerfield. We were in the fifth inning and trying hard to keep runners from getting into scoring position. As the runner rounded second and headed to third I came up ready to throw him out. I picked the ball up and stepped toward third; the ball came out like bullet right on line, the runner would have been out by a mile. Unfortunately, the ball was so high the third baseman ran back to the fence in hopes it would hit the fence and drop down. The ball went over the six-foot-high fence and struck a baby that was in a car seat in the

stands. After a few minutes of fans running around in the stands and a ball player from the other team running from the dugout up into the stands I knew something was terribly wrong; however, I still didn't realize the ball hit a baby. After about five minutes of just standing in the outfield I finally started to walk toward third base so I could see what had happened. As I got close to third base I could tell things were not good. The car seat was still in the stands and everyone was huddled around it. I could hear the sirens from an ambulance in the distance and I could

see the worry on the faces of some of the spectators. By this time I figured out what had happened, I couldn't believe it. I felt like crap to say the least. The baby was breathing but for such a young child to be struck by a thrown object I was thinking the worst. When the ambulance arrived they rushed to the stands and started to examine the baby and after a few minutes they took the baby to the hospital. The baby turned out to be OK; however, I was not the same for the rest of the day; in fact, that incident is still with me even now. I constantly replayed the wild



Photo by: Airman 1st Class Krystal M. Jeffers

throw in my head. Should I have thrown the ball? Why didn't I just one hop the ball to third? To tell you the truth I don't even remember if we won the game or not, but what I do remember is that little child could have died that day because of my wild throw. One could say it wasn't my fault because it was just a bad throw and I really didn't mean to do it. But that really doesn't matter; I threw the ball and it struck a baby ... it was entirely my fault.

My desire to do my best and play this game like it was the national championship was wrong. I'm not saying

I shouldn't play at my highest level but it is just a game and my actions have consequences. Although I continued to play softball for many years after this event, it did change the way I played. It forced me to play more within my limitations and pay more attention to my surroundings. As with anything you do in life everything has risk. You might not think throwing a softball to third base was a risky decision; however, the parent in the stands may feel otherwise.

So you may be asking yourself what does this have to do with me? Remember

everything you do has consequences from driving a car after you have been drinking, not replacing your bald tires, and not getting enough rest before you start driving on a long vacation, to throwing a softball. As we enter the critical days of summer this year we will all be forced to make game-time decisions. Your job, if you choose to accept it, is to think things through, list out the pros and cons, think things out before you act. With good decision-making techniques we can all make it through the summer! 🍀