

Winter Edition 2014

Combat Edge

ACC's Full-Spectrum Safety Magazine



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CARE!

PAGE 8

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MARCOM AWARDS

Combat Edge

Volume 22 Issue 3, ACC SP 91-1



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ACCent



“Be That Airman”

There's no doubt we are part of the best Air Force in the world! I personally planned on serving for at least three more years, but then I got the news ... more on that a little later. Although our force recently experienced an extremely challenging period, we know that we're still a superior and unified force. In fact, our leaders clearly understand that no matter how technologically advanced our aircraft, they are only as effective as the dedicated and professional Airmen operating and maintaining them with unwavering commitment and boundless innovation. As a force, we must continue to recognize the issues before us and work together to confront the difficult challenges that threaten our most valued resource and all we stand for. The circumstances surrounding today's challenges have many faces, but we have a responsibility to ensure all wingmen are in the best position possible to cope with difficult times and challenges. So, are we ready to do just that?

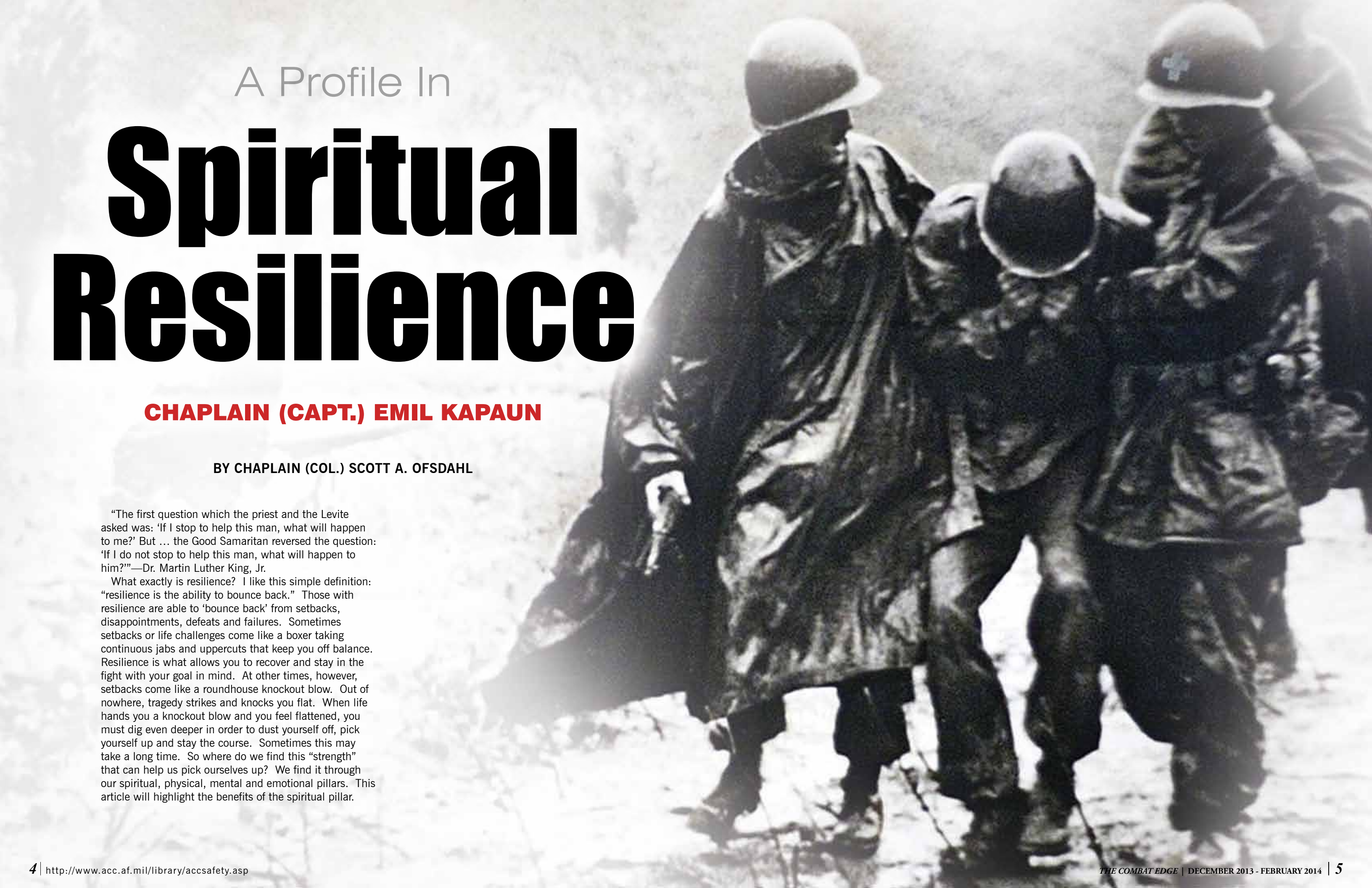
Our strength is undoubtedly in our devotion to operations and mission capabilities. It's clear that the United States Air Force is ready ... and answers in a supreme manner when our nation calls. However, let's think about a critical element of that readiness—resiliency ... and building resilient Airmen. In general, we are a product of our society and have to address difficult conditions often on a daily basis. We experience many of the same issues such as work-related problems, financial worries, marital concerns, and health complications, as our civilian counterparts. So, these issues are not new to us, but the way we choose to address them is extremely important and deserves everyone's attention. We must look out for one another and not settle for individuals only checking on members within their own peer group. We are so much stronger when we not only call ourselves a Total Force, but also act as a Total Force physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Think about our ability to withstand or recover from difficult conditions and if we're ready to act and improve that condition. Are we ready?

The simple answer is “yes” but the more complex response is “yes, but do we understand?” Life is not easy for any of us; understand that *no one* is alone in our force. A few months ago I was diagnosed with cancer – that quickly reaffirmed how important my faith, family, and friends are to me as well as others facing challenging times. I experienced a difficult period, but so did my family and friends. I'm truly blessed; I'm fine now, but I will never forget the unconditional support from my loving family and wonderful friends at home and on the job. Our immediate family and our Air Force family will always be our strength and center of gravity that we need to help us through that difficult moment. Remember that our creed notes, “*I will never leave an Airman behind.*” These are not just a few words—they mean something. Similarly, remember Lincoln's words in the Gettysburg Address, “*... the last full measure of devotion ...*” In our business, we are prepared to give our life for our comrades so please understand that our fellow Airmen will need us off the battlefield as well.

Everyone has a story and someone can always help. Know that there's probably someone else experiencing the same condition or situation as you, so never feel alone. We must have perseverance, and above all confidence in ourselves. Realize that reaching out for support or to help someone is a true sign of strength and bold character. Work hard to be the person you were meant to be—we need you all to “*Be that Airman!*”



**Chief Master Sgt.
Jacob E. Robinson, Jr.**
Chief of Ground Safety



A Profile In Spiritual Resilience

CHAPLAIN (CAPT.) EMIL KAPAUN

BY CHAPLAIN (COL.) SCOTT A. OFSDAHL

“The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But ... the Good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What exactly is resilience? I like this simple definition: “resilience is the ability to bounce back.” Those with resilience are able to ‘bounce back’ from setbacks, disappointments, defeats and failures. Sometimes setbacks or life challenges come like a boxer taking continuous jabs and uppercuts that keep you off balance. Resilience is what allows you to recover and stay in the fight with your goal in mind. At other times, however, setbacks come like a roundhouse knockout blow. Out of nowhere, tragedy strikes and knocks you flat. When life hands you a knockout blow and you feel flattened, you must dig even deeper in order to dust yourself off, pick yourself up and stay the course. Sometimes this may take a long time. So where do we find this “strength” that can help us pick ourselves up? We find it through our spiritual, physical, mental and emotional pillars. This article will highlight the benefits of the spiritual pillar.



So what is “spiritual” resilience? Again, keeping it simple, I’d say that “spiritual” resilience is based on one’s purpose and meaning in life which may or may not come from faith-based resources. Your purpose and meaning in life provide an essential resource or compass for paddling through life’s whitewater. A perfect example of faith-based “spiritual” resilience is the life of Ch., Capt. Emil Kapaun. Kapaun’s story offers us important keys to finding our inner strength not only to overcome life’s jabs, uppercuts and knockout blows but his story also illustrates the power of a “purpose” driven life. A life defined by one of our core values—“service before self.”

On 11 April 2013, President Obama told the story of Father Emil Kapaun, an Army Chaplain from Kansas, who served in the US Army during the Korean War and then posthumously awarded him the Medal of Honor at the White House. Kapaun’s story is best told in the President’s own words (*abbreviated with some editing*):

After the communist invasion of South Korea, Kapaun was among the first American troops that hit the beaches and pushed their way north through hard mountains and bitter cold. That’s when the Chinese forces entered the war with a massive surprise attack—perhaps 20,000 soldiers pouring down on a few thousand Americans. In the chaos, dodging bullets and explosions, Kapaun raced between foxholes, out past the front lines and into no-man’s land—dragging the wounded to safety.

When his commanders ordered an evacuation, knowing that he would be over run, he chose to stay—gathering the injured, tending their wounds. When the enemy broke through and the combat was hand-to-hand, he carried on—comforting the injured and the dying, offering some measure of peace as they died.

When enemy forces bore down, it seemed like the end—that these wounded Americans, more than a dozen of them, would be gunned down. But Kapaun spotted a wounded Chinese officer. He pleaded with this Chinese officer and convinced him to call out his fellow Chinese. The shooting stopped and they negotiated a safe surrender, saving those American lives.

Then, as Kapaun was being led away, he saw another American, US Army Staff Sgt. Herbert Miller—wounded, unable to walk, lying in a ditch, defenseless. An enemy soldier was standing over him, rifle aimed at his head, ready to shoot. Kapaun marched over and pushed the enemy soldier aside. And then as the soldier watched, stunned, Kapaun carried that wounded American away.

He carried the injured sergeant, for miles, as their captors forced them on a death march. When Kapaun grew tired, he’d help the wounded SSgt Miller hop on one leg. When other prisoners stumbled, he picked them up. When they wanted to quit—knowing that stragglers would be shot—he begged them to keep walking.

In the camps that winter, deep in the valley, men could freeze to death in their sleep. Kapaun offered them his own clothes. They starved on tiny rations of millet and

corn and birdseed. He somehow snuck past the guards, foraged in nearby fields, and returned with rice and potatoes. In desperation, some men hoarded food. He convinced them to share. Their bodies were ravaged by dysentery. He grabbed some rocks, pounded metal into pots and boiled clean water. They lived in filth. He washed their clothes and cleansed their wounds.

The guards ridiculed his devotion to his Savior and the Almighty. They took his clothes and made him stand in the freezing cold for hours. Yet, he never lost his faith. If anything, it only grew stronger. That faith—that they might be delivered from evil, that they could make it home—was perhaps the greatest gift to those men; that even amidst such hardship and despair, there could be hope; amid their misery in the temporal they could see those truths that are eternal; that even in such hell, there could be a touch of the divine. Looking back, one of them said that is what “kept a lot of us alive.”

Yet, for Kapaun, the horrific conditions took their toll. Thin, frail he began to limp, with a blood clot in his leg. And then comes the dysentery, then pneumonia. That’s when the guards saw their chance to finally rid themselves of this priest and the hope he inspired. They came for him. And over the protests and tears of the men who loved him, the guards sent him to a death house—a hellhole with no food or water—to be left to die. And then, as he was taken away, he did something remarkable—he blessed the guards. “Forgive them,”

he said, “for they know not what they do.” Two days later, in that house of death, Kapaun breathed his last breath. He was 35 years old. His body was taken away, his grave unmarked, his remains unrecovered to this day.

As the President said, “this is the valor we honor—an American soldier who didn’t fire a gun, but who wielded the mightiest weapon of all, a love for his brothers so pure that he was willing to die so that they might live.

This holiday season, we might ask ourselves a few important questions. On a scale of 1-10, how do you rate your own spiritual resilience? Love, faith, hope, forgiveness and service before self were keys to Kapaun’s ability to draw upon inner strength and overcome the trauma of war. Where do you go to find the strength to overcome? Have a happy holiday season. 🌟





WE REALLY DO **CARE!**

BY LT. COL. MATT “MANGO” EDWARDS

Many thanks to contributions from ACC/A3MH, 9 MXG, 9 PSPTS, and 9 RW/PA

So there I was ... above 60,000 feet on an operational U-2 mission in the Middle East when my left knee started acting up. This wasn't new; I'd had pain in my knee before. One of the joys of flying the “Deuce” is that you learn early on that certain parts of your body get fatigued sooner when sitting for long periods of time, for me it was a high school sports injury that flares up around the 7.5 hour point. Like clockwork my knee started to twinge, but little did I know that I was actually starting to feel the beginning symptoms of Decompression Sickness (DCS), commonly known as the “bends.” Within 30 minutes I had gone from minor aches to a sweating, groaning mess nearly incapacitated from the pain, even after dialing up the pressure in my suit. The slow buildup of nitrogen micro-bubbles in my body was pushing my muscles, tendons, and kneecap apart from the inside. Somewhere between gritting my teeth and the emergency descent I thought two things: “At least the bubbles are in my knee and not my brain!” and “Where’s that CARE modification when I need it?!”

The Cockpit Altitude Reduction Effort (CARE) is the result of countless hours of effort throughout the Air Force to reduce the pressure altitude in the U-2 cockpit to avoid incidents of DCS and the possible loss of the pilot or the aircraft. DCS is caused by the inadequate elimination of dissolved inert gas (nitrogen) that becomes bubbles in the blood or body tissues as pressure decreases. In the human body, bubbles start to form at approximately 16,000 feet. More bubbles are generated the longer you stay above this altitude. Eventually you'll show signs of DCS, not if, but when (think of it as twisting the cap off a soda, the faster you loosen the cap, the more gas comes out). This is why U-2 pilots perform a 60 minute pre-breathing of 100 percent oxygen, to force as much nitrogen out of the body and supersaturate the blood and tissues with oxygen. Research has shown that the risk of DCS increases very rapidly once an altitude of 21,000 feet is reached. The non-CARE modified U-2 cockpit altitude is 29,500 feet, roughly the height of Mt. Everest.

From the inception of the U-2 in 1955 to June of 1998, there were no official reports of mishaps, deaths, or serious DCS symptoms (reported operational cases involved predominantly joint pain). Based upon previous DCS research, nearly all DCS incidents should occur within the first four hours of exposure. Also, using a U-2 mission altitude profile, analysis from the Air Force Research Laboratory DCS Risk Assessment Computer, calculated a 73 percent risk of developing DCS symptoms. Therefore, the true incidence of DCS in the U-2 program was probably higher than previously reported. In 1999 the USAF aeromedical regulations changed the previous policy regarding permanently grounding pilots who reported DCS. Surveys of previous U-2 pilots revealed widespread under-reporting, revealing that 60-80 percent of respondents experienced DCS symptoms at some point in their careers, with 16-18 percent of these being neurologic DCS (NDCS), where nitrogen bubbles form on the brain. These are often called “neuro-hits.”

Between 1991 and 2009, there were 67 U-2 pilot DCS incidents reported and an upward spike in 2009 of NDCS. Thirty-seven of

the reported incidents took place between 2002 to 2009. Of the 16 confirmed incidents, 12 occurred at one deployed operating location, four of which were life-threatening. This coincided with changes in U-2 operations related to Global War on Terrorism and contingency operations support. The main changes were that pilots were flying longer missions (average sortie duration increased from 8.2 to 9.3 hours), were flying more frequently (pilot pool decreased from 49 to 37 pilots and increased average annual sorties from 42 to 92), and pilots were moving around more in the cramped cockpit (Troops-In-Contact support, aircraft mission changes, and glass cockpit upgrade). Research has shown that DCS symptoms become more pronounced with increased physical activity. Between 2002 and 2011, 15 pilots were no longer combat mission-ready due to DCS, representing a \$35 million loss in combat-ready U-2 aircrew. Eighty percent of all pilots who experienced neuro-hits will never return to U-2 high flight again.

After the high-profile Kevin Henry DCS event in March 2006, chronicled in the May 2010 Combat Edge article, and the noted increase in DCS cases, the

9th Reconnaissance Wing (9 RW) enlisted the help of experts from Brooks City Base (now located at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio) to find out why there was an increase and what steps could be implemented to reduce decompression symptoms. In 2009, the Brooks report recommended using exercise-enhanced pre-breathing (EEP) which involves 10 minutes of exercise during the 60-minute 100 percent oxygen pre-breathe period. The research showed that incorporating exercise into the 100 percent oxygen pre-breathe period should reduce the risk of DCS by 40 percent (each additional hour of resting pre-breathe only decreases the risk by 10 percent). The problem with EEP is that exercise increases the pilot’s core body temperature prior to donning the full-pressure suit (FPS). The FPS, maintained by the 9th Physiological Support Squadron (9 PSPTS), is designed to be its own environment, completely encapsulating the pilot, in the event of a rapid decompression at 70,000 feet. Cooling air from the aircraft or from ground cooling units is used to regulate the pilot’s temperature once the suit is donned. For each 10 minutes without cooling air, the

core body temperature increases one degree Fahrenheit. A 10-degree increase puts the pilot at risk of heat stroke. Increasing the core temperature before stepping to fly a jet at a location where outside temperatures regularly exceed 110° F elevates the risk-level for the takeoff and departure part of the mission. The Brooks experts also recommended flying shorter missions, increasing the time between missions, and increasing the pressure in the FPS or the cockpit. Neither the pilots nor the Air Force wanted to shorten the sortie duration, especially since the U-2 frequently supported troops on the ground in combat. Increasing the time between missions required more pilots which would be difficult at a time of constrained manning and resources. Increasing the pressure in the cockpit would be the only viable long-term solution to the DCS problem and that would require a lot of work by the entire U-2 community, as well as support from Air Force leadership.

When the U-2 was designed in the 1950s, each component of the aircraft was tested independently for stress tolerance and failure mode. A “safety factor” of 20 percent was added to each measured stress tolerance. As the aircraft was pieced together, all of these component safety factors combined additively to result in an airframe that was overbuilt for the overall planned safety factor. Using modern computer-aided design software, Lockheed was able to integrate the pieces together with a single safety factor and finite element analysis showed that a cabin altitude of 15,000 feet was achievable by modifying the cockpit structure, replacing valves, changing the bleed air system logic, and altering the cockpit controls. A

cockpit pressurized to 15,000 feet effectively tightens the cap on the soda; no more bubbles. Once the feasibility of the CARE modification was established, the 9 RW, the U-2 community across the Air Force, and safety leadership raised the issue to ACC’s commander who said, “Although the U-2 is scheduled to retire, it’s the right thing to do for our pilot’s.” And that’s how the CARE modification was born.



Photo by: Senior Airman Shawn Nickel

In the interim, the 9 RW deployed more pilots to increase the interval between flights and ACC increased U-2 pilot production to support the increased deployment rates. The 9th Operations Group established firmer rules regarding minimum ground time between flights and implemented exercise enhanced pre-breathing before each U-2 mission.

Once the CARE modification program began, four aircraft at a time received CARE modifications which minimized the number of available aircraft for real-world missions. In order to modify all 22 single-seat

U-2s, continue supporting the COCOMs, and keep global phase maintenance on track, Lockheed Martin maintenance crews worked 10-hour shifts, six days a week for 10 months. Once the modification commenced, maintenance was still able to generate the required 140 sorties per month due to the extra hours they put in to meet the grueling schedule. The first CARE-modified aircraft deployed in November of 2012 and the last jet rolled off the line in June of 2013, 14 months ahead of schedule, saving \$22 million.

So what happened to me? As I descended, the pressure in the cockpit increased and slowly pushed the nitrogen back into my body and the pain decreased, but I was still hurting an hour later when I finally landed (max crosswinds and full rudder with the bad knee, of course). After the life support folks pulled me out of the cockpit, they kept me on 100 percent oxygen and transported me to a nearby dive chamber where I went through a complete six-hour dive profile. I was lucky; there had been no permanent damage to my knee and I was back flying the Deuce in a couple of weeks. I also had the distinct honor of flying the last non-CARE modified jet back from

overseas without incident (a flight well over 10 hours in case you’re interested in applying). In the end it took a lot of concerned people, working long hours, across several disciplines, to get the U-2 where it is today and it’s paid off. The U-2 retirement has been pushed back until at least 2023 and my incident in August 2012 was the last reported U-2 DCS case. Hopefully, it will stay that way. Does the Air Force CARE? You bet it does! Solum Volamus (we fly alone).✱

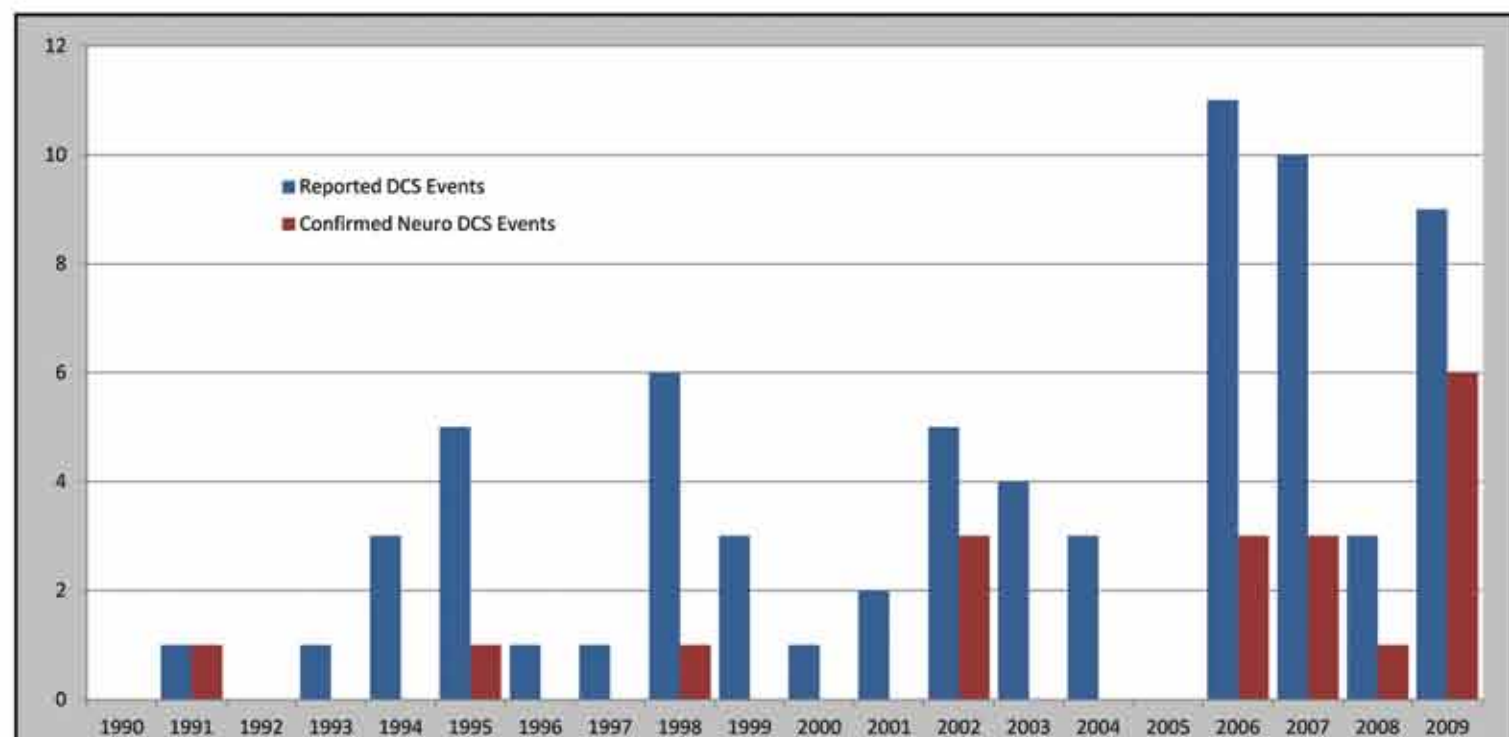


Fig. 1. Reported U-2 operational DCS incidents (1990-2009).



Everyone is **Out to Get You**

BY CAPT. JOE

When my dad was teaching me how to ride a motorcycle, he would say, “each time you pull that bike out of the garage you have to believe that every driver out there is trying to kill you.” There are two premises here; one is unstated: (1) The rider has to see the traffic, and (2) the rider has to expect the driver to make an unsafe decision. Put in military terms, the rider has to have high situational awareness (SA), and always prepare for the enemy’s most dangerous course of action.

Recently, I instructed an MQ-1B Predator close air support (CAS) training sortie. As the instructor pilot (IP), I was in command of that mission. The upgrading pilot briefed the sortie to me and his enlisted sensor operator (SO). That day we had contracted joint terminal attack controller (JTAC) support. Those individuals did an excellent job replicating real-world scenarios and inducing fog and friction in a training environment. I had flown multiple sorties with the crew that week, and they were doing well. As such, I briefed the lead JTAC that he should not hold anything back. He didn’t.

What followed was a fairly robust CAS scenario. It involved multiple friendly locations as well as an enemy that was intentionally difficult to find. There were simulated casualties that required immediate helicopter med evac. This apparent full-scale engagement was presented to the crew by a handful of JTACs on the ground with VHF radios and pyrotechnics. The realism they produced, however, was evident in the sensor operator’s comment that he “almost expected to see actual HH-60s rolling into the helicopter landing zone.



Photo by: Staff Sgt. N.B.

coordinates into the targeting pod, or as complex as finding enemy personnel via a talk-on from a confused and disoriented, hunkered-down JTAC taking effective fire.

(2) Optimize the picture: Different tactical situations will require different camera parameters. Searching for people in a tree line will require a drastically different infrared (IR) picture than will searching for a convoy on a mountain road at night or maintaining a track on a moving vehicle in order to engage it with a Hellfire missile. Standing water, blowing dust, thermal crossover will all drive the SO to a different camera setup.

(3) The SO is master of the laser: The pilot has no method of controlling the

laser systems. While the pilot is responsible for when and where the laser is fired, only the SO can actuate it. Whether the LRD (the one inadvertently fired in the narrative above), or the IR pointer, the SO must be master of the laser systems on board the aircraft. The SO is, first and foremost, a technician. His SA must reach, at a minimum, as far as his camera and laser systems.

The SO on my CAS training sortie could have saved the day. He could have recognized the illegitimate command given by the pilot, and responded “confirm simulate laser on,” or something to that effect. But if we are asking the SO to save the situation, then the pilot and I have already failed.

The pilot. The pilot’s job is to lead the crew to accomplish the mission. The pilot is more than a technician. He is more than a system operator. While he will actuate switches and operate equipment, he is also commanding the crew. His SA needs to reach outside of his crew position to envelop the aircraft, the crew, the JTAC and the tactical situation on the ground. He must not only issue directives to the SO, but he must observe whether those directives are being honored, and with what degree of proficiency. The pilot may have to change his methods, the manner in which he issues directives, or even the directives themselves, depending on the performance of the crew.

In this case the pilot’s SA was low. He was unaware that he failed to preface his laser calls with ‘simulate.’ He was unaware that the SO was taking his directives literally, and he was unaware that by so doing, he was violating squadron communication standards.

While the SO could have saved the situation, the pilot is the one who caused the dangerous situation to develop in the first place.

The IP. Now it is my turn. If the SO must have SA on his system, and the upgrading pilot must have SA on the crew and the mission, what is required of the IP?

The standard for the instructor pilot is high, and rightfully so. The IP needs to have all the SA of the pilot and more. If the pilot needs to recognize that he’s passing improper directives to the crew, the IP should sense the pilot’s task saturation prior to that point and expect communication and crew resource management errors. If the upgrading pilot needs to be aware of the SO’s laser actions, the IP needs to be able to sense where the SO is mentally, and whether he is lagging behind the jet before such errors occur. While the pilot requires situational awareness, the instructor pilot needs predictive awareness. The IP needs to be able to see a dangerous situation developing long before the hazard is fully grown.

If the SO could have saved the hazard, and the pilot caused the hazard, the IP should have prevented the hazard; and not necessarily in the moment the error occurred. If the IP waits to begin evaluating the performance and proficiency of the crew until the CAS event begins, he has waited too long.

What if I had applied my dad’s motorcycle advice that day? With no live missile on the rail the most dangerous piece of equipment on the airplane that day was the LRD. What if I had walked into the briefing room telling myself, like the safe motorcycle rider that “someone is going to do something stupid and try to hurt someone today”? What if I had paid attention to the pilot’s brief, not as a crew member, but as the IP, waiting to hear for something ambiguous? What if I had listened for anything the SO might misunderstand? I recall now that the pilot briefed “we won’t use the laser all day.” But that was all he said.

The squadron standards direct a simulated call, but he didn’t brief these calls—not even as standard. He didn’t brief the SO on what to do in the absence of a simulated call. Should he continue as though he heard “simulated”? Should he correct the pilot and demand the correct terminology? These are contracts the pilot could have established in the brief.

These observations are not intended to show that the pilot doomed us all to failure. They instead intend to show that if I had eaten my instructor Wheaties that morning, I might have recognized a trend developing. The pilot didn’t respect the laser as a dangerous piece of equipment; and by failing to notice that fact, I didn’t

either. The pilot had not thought through the standards for laser usage, nor possible deviations from those standards. As an instructor, I would have been within my rights to interrupt the brief then and there to clarify any ambiguity. I would have also been justified, however, to take note of the poor briefing regarding the laser and expect a forthcoming problem with laser communications. But I did neither.

In the brief moment between the pilot’s “laser on” call and the SO’s switch activation, I found myself, if not speechless, at least slow. Should I say “terminate”? I don’t really want to terminate the scenario. Should I say “standby” or “disregard”? Should I just say “simulated”? By the time my brain was ready to turn any of these thoughts into words it was too late. If I had taken my dad’s motorcycle advice, ... if I had adequately assessed the crew’s performance and identified problem areas starting in the briefing, I would have not only anticipated a laser safety issue, but would have had a response prepared. Had I thought to myself, “the crew is going to do something stupid to try to hurt someone today,” I would have either clarified the laser communication standards in the brief, or corrected the error as it occurred during the sortie.

Instructor pilots from undergraduate pilot training onward have always warned their students of falling behind the jet. If the pilot should be in front of the jet, the IP should be in front of the crew. The pilot made a mistake, and the SO failed to catch it. But as the instructor pilot and aircraft commander, my low SA allowed it. A safe motorcycle rider and a safe instructor pilot have this in common: Everyone needs to be prepared to handle the most dangerous potential events before getting into the seat so they can make the right decisions throughout the ride or the sortie. 🍌

Photo by: Master Sgt. Scott Wagers



The Lieutenant

Anatomy of a Sexual Assault

Editor's note: The following is the first of several fictional accounts based on actual events involving reported sexual assaults in the Air Force. The Pentagon released a recent sexual assault report estimating that 26,000 service members experienced unwanted sexual contact in 2012, up from 19,000 in 2010. These stories are designed to dispel some myths about sex offenders, their personality characteristics, demographics, and their victims.

BY MASTER SGT. AMAANI LYLE

HAF Sexual Assault Prevention Office Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

1st Lt. Jeff C.

Being an Air Force pilot was always my dream. So when I graduated from the Air Force Academy a couple of years ago and joined a flying squadron overseas, I was psyched that I was getting to do all that I'd imagined and more, in Europe at that! Everything seemed to be happening so fast: I got engaged, learned I'd soon be promoted and finally got a chance to prove I wasn't some clueless LT with an ego.

I found in my boss, Maj. R, a great mentor and friend. He and his wife would have us over for dinner and poker nights and he just knew so much about the Air Force and the military in general. He taught me how to cut through the politics, earn the loyalty of my troops and advance in my career without stepping on toes.

So when it was time for my promotion party and he offered to host it at his large home, who was I to turn it down? I love a great party, but I don't drink so I never expected I'd find myself vulnerable to what happened next.



Amid the beer bottles, plastic cups of scotch and vodka and the faint smell of cigars, there I sat on the couch in Maj. R's den as the last party guests left, among them my fiancée, who was very tired and got a ride home with friends. The major's wife had long since retired to bed too, and though I was exhausted, I offered to stay and help the major clean up in gratitude for the wonderful evening. The major had a few drinks, but certainly did not seem "hammered." He emerged from the kitchen with some tea, which he said would help me relax and get to sleep easier once I got home. I sipped the tea and soon finished it as we laughed and tossed bottles into trash bags while rehashing the night.

It became clear that it was no normal tea. I don't know exactly what he added, but I knew I wasn't feeling right.

I began to feel woozy and wanted to sit down. "What was in that tea?" I wondered, but I remember struggling to string together the words to even form the question. Before I knew it, the major was sitting next to me rubbing my arm and smiling, while assuring me I was experiencing nothing more than relaxation, an unwinding of sorts after a busy day and long night. He put his arm around me and I felt my head slump over onto his shoulder as he rubbed my leg, higher and higher until he was fondling me. Not only was I in shock and scared, but I was too weak and dizzy to tell him to stop. He laid me down on the couch, pulled down my pants and sexually

assaulted me. I was stunned, devastated but couldn't control the way my body was reacting. After it was over, he called me a "champ" then threw a blanket over me. I'd never felt so humiliated in my life. When I woke up several hours later, I scrambled out of there as quickly as I could and vowed I'd take that secret to the grave.

Life seemed to go on, but it felt like I was on auto pilot. I became a mere observer, not a participant in everyday living, even in significant events such as my wedding. After months of silence, stress-induced weight loss, my avoidance of Maj. R and my receding from nearly all in my social circle, my fiancée and I had a small wedding before our permanent change of station back to the United States.

I thought moving would make what happened to me less real and less impacting. For so long I told myself it just didn't happen. I fooled myself into thinking that I was really just a victim of "someone slipping me a mickey" not someone sexually assaulting me. Many times when I would drive, I'd miss my exit from the highway and one time, I even drifted into another lane from daydreaming. My wife began to take it all personally and it affected our marriage.

I dreaded the holidays approaching because I didn't want to hurt the people I love by telling them someone hurt me. At our Thanksgiving dinner, my wife's uncle, a pastor, joined me on the patio. We got to talking and even

Myth: Sexual Assault only happens to females.

Fact: The Pentagon reports that of the 26,000 cases of unwanted sexual contact, 53 percent involved attacks on men, mostly by other men. However, of the reported cases, women are predominantly the majority of those who report.

laughing but he knew something was wrong. He said my spirit seemed bruised, but not broken. There was hope—but I had to trust those who care about me to get help.

After he left, I fought tears and decided to make the calls to the Air Force chaplain and mental health professionals the next day. I didn't want to lose the people so dear to me.

After some weeks of spiritual and mental rehabilitation, I finally mustered the courage to go forth and report my assault. I am now strong enough to work with Air Force Office of Special Investigation agents as well as special victims' counselors to help me get through these challenging times and bring my assaulter to justice—not just for me, but for others who may fall victim to him or others like him.

I even found the strength to tell my wife, knowing there was a possibility she could question me, the marriage, my sexuality, fidelity, everything that was important to us. It became clear that this isn't about gender, or sexuality, or even about sex. It's about power and its by-product on the victim, humiliation.

Well, my wife didn't let me down and stood by my side. I am still a long way from complete recovery with the knowledge that there may always be emotional fractures, but now is the time to manage pain, survive and be stronger than ever before.

My strength comes from within, but my healing without a doubt will and must come from my family and community. ■

AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

Aircrew Safety

MAJ. KIRK O’CONNOR, 1st LT LAUREN TWITTY, 1st LT CODY PERRY, STAFF SGT. CHADD GULLEDGE, 968 EAACS, AL DHAFRA AB, UAE. The crew of Whistler 51 displayed outstanding airmanship while flying an E-3 AWACS during a combat sortie. Dealing with multiple malfunctions, the crew safely recovered the aircraft with 20 personnel on board. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

CREW OF TIGER 43, 37 BS, ELLSWORTH AFB SD. The crew of Tiger 43, a B-1B on a night training mission, masterfully handled a complex electrical malfunction and safely recovered the aircraft due to superior systems knowledge and exemplary airmanship. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

CAPT. ROBERT A. WALLER, MAJ. MICHAEL P. DEROSA, 333 FS, SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB NC. The crew of Boot 31 experienced an unsafe gear indication after takeoff for a night training sortie. The crew’s actions and judgment during the complex emergency allowed the safe recovery of their F-15E. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

Pilot Safety

CAPT. JUSTIN A. ANKENBRUCK, 421 FS, HILL AFB UT. Capt. Ankenbruck distinguished himself by safely recovering an F-16 with a dangerous compound emergency. While dealing with an emergency not addressed in the aircraft checklist, he reacted in a manner consistent with the highest flying standards. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

CAPT. JOSEPH S. MIRANDA, 480 EFS, KANDAHAR AB, AFGHANISTAN. During a combat sortie, Capt. Miranda correctly recognized and handled a major electrical malfunction in IMC conditions. Despite a high gross weight due to the aircraft’s combat configuration, he safely recovered his F-16. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

MAJ. MICHAEL D. SCHANER, 149 FS, JB LANGLEY-EUSTIS VA. Maj. Schaner safely recovered his F-22 during a training sortie after experiencing a substantial hydraulic leak. His actions exhibited exceptional emergency procedures execution and aircraft control during the complicated emergency. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

Flight Line Safety

SRA CHRISTOPHER M. O’HARA, 455 EAMXS, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. SrA O’Hara swiftly responded to and extinguished a brush fire behind the Air Force Special Operations fuel cell hangar where an EC-130 had two open fuel tanks. His decisive efforts prevented the loss of a multi-million dollar hangar facility and an entire Compass Call aircraft, valued at over \$165 million. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

STAFF SGT. JAMAIRA CENTENO, A1C BRANDI A. BROWN, A1C BROOKE A. DE LA CUADRA, 4 OSS, SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB NC. As two KC-10s taxied down the primary parallel taxiway leading to the EOR, the increased engine thrust caused rocks and debris from the shoulders of the taxiway to spray across the active taxiway. Sgt. Centeno, and Airmen Brown and De La Cuadra conducted a 4,300-foot FOD walk of the taxiway and cleared a total of over 10 pounds of rocks and pebbles. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

SRA TRISTAN SOTTO, SRA ZACHARY OSIUS, A1C JOSEPH MCNAIR, 552 MXS, TINKER AFB OK. Airmen Sotto and Osius and A1C McNair noticed the equipment being cooled by the forward forced air system was extremely warm. Their immediate reactions prevented possible life-threatening injury to themselves, other nearby flight line personnel, and catastrophic damage to a \$172K air conditioning unit and a \$330M E-3 aircraft. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

Crew Chief Safety

TECH. SGT. JOSHUA M. KREAGER, 380 EAMXS, AL DHAFRA AB, UAE. During launch operations just after engine start, Sgt. Kreager noticed the E-bay was leaking air past the hatch. His quick actions saved the on-time departure of the ISR mission and thwarted a high altitude cockpit depressurization, ensuring pilot safety. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

SRA MARQUELL J. SIMPSON, 1 AMXS, JB LANGLEY-EUSTIS VA. While performing a routine EOR inspection for a four-ship of F-22s preparing to takeoff from Langley, SrA Simpson observed a hub cap on one of the F-22’s main landing gear to appear not properly seated in accordance to the tech order guidance. His attention to detail, aircraft knowledge and quick actions ensured safe and judicious actions were taken, preventing the potential of a catastrophic event and preserved a \$143M national asset. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

STAFF SGT. JONATHAN D. BEAU, 379 EAMXS, AL UDEID AB, QATAR. Just as the B-7 stand for the crew to deplane the aircraft was placed and secured into position, Sgt. Beau looked towards the landing gear and noticed a one-foot flame coming from the number two brake assembly. His quick thinking and reaction thwarted the loss of a high-demand/low-density aircraft valued at \$178M and prevented injuries to 19 flight crew members and six maintainers. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

Weapons Safety

STAFF SGT. KELLEY E. HAGERMAN, 49 MXS, HOLLOMAN AFB N.M. Sgt. Hagerman identified live 5.56 MM and .50 caliber blank rounds mixed in with expended cartridge casings in the unit’s munitions residue bins. His sharp observations directly contributed to the safety and success of the unit’s personnel and mission by preventing any potential explosives mishaps. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

MASTER SGT. TROY C. GRAVATT, 1 MXS, JB LANGLEY-EUSTIS VA. While performing a spot inspection on Langley’s munitions storage structures, Sgt. Gravatt discovered several lightning protection system air terminals missing on three earth-covered igloos. His decisive actions helped ensure the safety of critical assets and munitions flight personnel during the most active time of year for electrical storms in the Hampton-Roads area. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

SRA MATTHEW S. WALTHER, 455 EAMXS, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. Amn Walther was troubleshooting a windshield anti-ice malfunction on an A-10C when he noticed something awry with the wiring going into the left-hand circuit breaker panel. His keen eye prevented the inevitable failure of numerous aircraft systems, an increased risk of catastrophic failure of the LAU-131 rocket pod, the potential loss of aircraft and the aircrew. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

Ground Safety

STAFF SGT. JUSTIN S. REASBECK, 455 ELRS, BAGRAM AF, AFGHANISTAN. Upon his arrival at Bagram, Sgt. Reasbeck was handed struggling Safety and Fire Prevention programs. His hard work and dedication increased the safety and accountability of all assigned personnel, equipment, and structures. His programs were noted as “extremely detailed” and “one of the best” seen to date. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

MR. GARY P. CHELETTE, 723 AMXS, MOODY AFB GA. Mr. Chelette observed a nose landing gear tow arm discrepancy on an HC-130P. His attention to detail helped him spot a lack of thread protrusion on the aft bolt for the tow arm, known as the “elephant ear,” preventing potential catastrophic damage associated with a towing mishap where the tow bar fitting could break, leading to a separation of the tow vehicle from the aircraft. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

TECH. SGT. FELSIA J. JONES, 64 ESS, ESKAN VILLAGE, KSA. In a two-week timeline, Sgt. Jones trained 20 volunteers in basic fire prevention safety, guiding them through hands-on practical training focused on assessing fire and eliminating risk to victims and augmentees. He also rewrote six safety publications, nailing down the standards for mishap prevention and hazardous materials programs, vital to the safety of the Department of State mission. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

Unit Safety

354TH FIGHTER SQ, DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB AZ. While being stood down due to sequester and flying limited sorties with D-M’s other A-10 squadrons, the 354th ensured a core group of squadron leadership were ready and able to regenerate the squadron to full combat mission-ready status when ordered to do so. Their unwavering commitment to compliance, discipline, and a culture of risk management led to the Bulldog’s outstanding safety record during a time of unprecedented challenges. *(Awarded Aug. 2013)*

430TH EXPEDITIONARY ELECTRONIC COMBAT SQ, KANDAHAR AB, AFGHANISTAN. The 430 EECS executed more than 891 mishap-free flying hours, an increase of three percent over the previous month, providing unprecedented BACN mission support to OEF. Missions supported an increase in TICs, PRIs, and SOF missions and ensured UNO for ground combat forces which directly resulted in saving the lives of NATO forces. *(Awarded Sep. 2013)*

7TH EXPEDITIONARY AIR COMMAND CONTROL SQ, AL UDEID AB, QATAR. The 7 EACCS displayed an enduring commitment to ground and flight safety through the proficient handling of five smoke/fumes incidents, an engine shutdown, a HATR, two pressurization incidents, leadership safety emphasis, and a robust safety education program. Their efforts resulted in the prevention of hazardous incidents, as well as the safe recovery of five \$366M E-8C aircraft and their aircrew from potentially catastrophic events. *(Awarded Oct. 2013)*

QUARTERLY AWARDS

Flight Safety



MAJ. PATRICK H. SMILEY, 358 FS, DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB AZ. Maj. Smiley distinguished himself through sustained superior performance in flight safety throughout the third quarter of 2013. During that time period, Maj. Smiley judiciously oversaw the aviation safety program in the 358th Fighter Squadron, while spearheading preparation and planning for the 2014 annual DMAFB Open House Airshow. His commitment to excellence ensured a top-notch safety program during transition in the squadron and handoff of the safety program. He also briefed a F-16 Class A mishap to over 100 aircrew members during the wing quarterly flight safety meeting, effectively communicating critical lessons learned that will prevent future mishaps. While expertly handling these high visibility wing level projects, Maj. Smiley also averted disaster during a night training sortie while instructing N-1, his student pilot's first sortie at night in the single seat A-10C. His quick thinking and expert judgment led to the safe recovery of the 2-ship at Luke AFB when thunderstorms forced the tower at Davis-Monthan AFB to evacuate due to high winds. Without his quick and accurate decision making, Maj Smiley's student would have gone below minimum fuel to divert to Luke AFB. Individually, Maj Smiley flew over 50 mishap-free hours and instilled a culture of flight safety and risk management in 13 upgrading pilots both in flight and in the classroom. Finally, Maj. Smiley provided squadron leadership with 14 mission-critical CAF-wide safety updates that provided valuable insights which enhanced situational awareness and facilitated successful mission accomplishment.

Ground Safety



TECH. SGT. NOLAND NOBLE, 55 SFS, OFFUTT AFB NE. Tech. Sgt. Noland Noble excelled in all aspects of ground and traffic safety through enhanced daily risk management practices and reducing his personnel's exposure to hazardous workplace conditions. Sgt. Noble led Offutt Ambassadors', promoting sound traffic and ground safety practices, coordinating with base civil engineering to develop a plan to widen traffic lanes to prevent Ft. Crook Road off ramp lanes from merging with Capehart Road inbound traffic. This process eliminated traffic-merge confusion, decreased vehicle mishaps, and significantly reduced base entry time by 60 percent. Additionally, Sgt. Noble thoroughly reviewed construction plans for the \$11M USSTRATCOM gate project, improving the layout of signs associated with speed, merging, and the newly installed ground retractable automobile barrier system. Sgt. Noble also led his section in creating and implementing a new seven-part plan to facilitate speed limits, alleviate outbound lane merging issues, and improve lane striping to prevent vehicles from parking within the barrier system clear zone. Furthermore, he increased personal safety standards for his team, directing personnel to don protective helmets while inspecting commercial vehicles. Sgt. Noble addressed his team's major concerns over providing traffic control by updating policy to mandate wear of traffic safety vests while working the gate, enhancing base safety and preserving his installation gate section's ability to process 10K vehicles daily. His distinctive, innovative accomplishments exemplify the essence of occupational safety and risk management, and are undoubtedly worthy of the quarterly ground safety award.

Weapons Safety















STAFF SGT. DANIEL N. MORRIS, 823 MXS, NELLIS AFB NV. During a 34th Weapons Squadron sortie, a GAU-2/7.62 millimeter machine gun experienced an in-flight malfunction—a round jammed inside of the weapon during firing and this resulted in a hung gun emergency. The high explosive round failed to extract during the firing cycle and this caused an additional live round to double feed into the same barrel. The aircrew were unaware of the severity of the condition that had been created, landed and parked the HH-60 normally instead of proceeding to the hung-gun safing area. Staff Sgt. Morris recognized the considerable risk to the safety of over 40 flight line technicians and six aircrew members. He immediately remedied the situation by evacuating the area and up-channeling the situation. He further responded by initiating the emergency action checklist and notified the Fire Department, Wing Safety, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and the Weapons Standardization Section. Once the Fire Department and EOD arrived on site, Sgt. Morris provided meticulous system expertise and direction for the EOD team. This enabled their team to safe the weapon and remove the jammed live round. His actions eliminated the potential hazards for a fatal situation. Sgt. Morris was the POC for an ACC/AFMC investigation into the possible cause of this mishap. The investigation resulted in a DoD-wide suspension of three lots of .50 caliber ammunition. His quick thinking and decisive actions were instrumental in course-correcting multiple dangerous situations and protecting his fellow Airmen at the same time. Sgt. Morris also rebuilt the section's ground/weapons safety programs, both of which were lauded by the 57 MXG Wing Weapons manager during an AFI 21-101 mandated inspection. Sgt. Morris designed an HH-60G weapons system malfunction course tailored to maintenance personnel and the operators of three squadrons. Sgt. Morris conducts this class on a monthly basis and 31 personnel have received training.

Mishap Statistics Scoreboard








FY13 Flight

As of September 30, 2013

	Fatal	Aircraft Destroyed	Class A Aircraft Damage
1 AF			
9 AF	1	  	
12 AF	4	   	
USAFWC		 	
ANG (ACC-gained)	1	 	
AFRC (ACC-gained)			

FY13 Ground

As of September 30, 2013

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

FY13 Weapons

As of September 30, 2013

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

Flight Notes

During the last quarter of the FY, ACC experienced six Class A mishaps. These were comprised of a fatality during HH-60 operations, a B-1B experiencing a catastrophic failure, a MQ-1 experiencing a lost link, a F-16 experiencing a mid-air collision, a F-16 being destroyed during landing, and a QF-4 being destroyed during take-off. As we enter a new FY with refreshed flying hours, mission operations and tactics training are critical facets of flying operations for ACC. However, we need to continue to ensure basic airmanship and proficiency are also stressed during flights to ensure our superb mission execution capability continues. On the maintenance side, the number one issue for FY13 was technical data violations. Note: this has remained at the top of the list for maintenance for the last six years. A continued focus by leadership on proper training and "top down" involvement can assist in addressing this issue.

Ground Notes

At the beginning of FY14, ACC sustained one fatal PMV4 mishap; this mishap is currently under investigation. The Air Force Holiday/Winter Safety Campaign begins on 22 Nov and ends on 27 Dec. Last year during this period, ACC suffered one PMV4 fatal mishap. During the Holiday/Winter campaign some of us will take time off to visit our family, friends, or just to relax. PMV and sports and recreation mishaps account for the majority of our off-duty mishaps and fatalities. Plan your trips wisely by using the Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS) to help mitigate your risks. Don't exceed your limitations with outdoor activities and exercising. Be festive; if you drink, do it responsibly. Have a solid plan and come back safely.

Weapons Notes

Great job to everyone involved in any explosive operation this quarter. We experienced only one mishap! Human Factors was causal and continues to be the number one cause of ACC Weapon Safety mishaps. Continue to refine your training plans, improve your work environment, and address anything else that could potentially be a distraction while working with explosives. Emphasis should be placed on doing the right thing all the time. The bottom line is to prevent accidents and incidents that might cause injury to personnel or damage to property. Thanks again for a job well done!

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





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OVER the Edge MAGAZINE



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The Air Force Ground Safety Holiday/Winter Campaign will run from 22 November 2013 through 2 January 2014. We've looked at the on- and off-duty mishap data for Class A, B and Cs. During the 2012 season, private motor vehicle and sports and recreation remained the categories with the greatest number of Class C mishaps (231). Unfortunately, zero fatalities have escaped us once again; we lost four Airmen; three of the four were vehicle-related mishaps.

The seasonal activities and celebrations we participate in all have unique risks. Being aware of these risks and preparing to the best of our abilities, helps keep everyone Safe 'n Sound. To help mitigate some of the mishaps and provide an additional resource for supervisors and commanders, Air Force Ground Safety has implemented CAC-enabled TRIPS (Travel Risk Planning System). Staying extra vigilant throughout the season and an increased effort in trip planning and preparation are part of the formula for everyone to return after the holidays **Safe 'n Sound!**



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Don't Turn Your Holiday into a Tragedy

Stay Safe and Drive Sober to Spread the Holiday Cheer

- Drunk driving fatalities occur all year round, but data shows that the holiday season is a particularly dangerous time on the roadways.
- In 2011, 760 people lost their lives as a result of drunk-driving-related crashes during the month of December alone.
- From 2007 to 2011, 14,318 people lost their lives during December. Twenty-nine percent (4,169) died in crashes that involved drivers with blood alcohol concentrations of .08 grams per deciliter or higher.
- Whether you've had just one or one too many, hand the keys to a sober driver. Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving.
- Your decisions can be the difference between life and death. When you drink and drive, you are endangering yourself, your passengers, and those on the road around you.

Remember, Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 32,367 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2011, and 31 percent (9,878) of those fatalities occurred in drunk-driving-related crashes.
- Even one drink can increase the risk of a crash while driving. Remember: Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving.
- Designate a sober driver before the party begins; plan a way to get home safely at the end of the night.
- If you are impaired, call a taxi, phone a sober friend or family member, use public transportation or call your local free ride program.
- Be responsible. If someone you know is drinking, do not let that person get behind the wheel.
- If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact law enforcement. Your actions may save someone's life or inaction could cost a life.
- Drunk driving can result in arrest, loss of driving privileges, higher insurance rates, lost time at work, court costs, fines, attorney's fees, and many other unwanted consequences.
- For more information on Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving, please visit www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov.

avoid
the
holiday
buzz buzzed driving is drunk driving.

holidaybuzzed.com



WHAT was I thinking?

BY TECH. SGT. DAVID J. HARTMAYER

I was an Airman First Class stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., who had been in the Air Force for all of six months. It was my first assignment; I didn't know anyone that well, so it got a bit lonely during the cold winter months. During our Christmas break, another Airman in my shop came to my dorm room early one morning to see if I wanted to go snowboarding at the nearby Deer Mountain Resort with a few guys. Now mind you, I had never snowboarded before, but wanted to impress the guys, maybe actually make a few friends in the process. When asked if I snowboarded, the answer came just a bit too quickly, "Of course." Over the next few hours, I packed the warmest clothing I had and went to the chow hall for some food to go. Then I headed over to the base library to Google "How to snowboard." Around noon, there was a knock on my door asking if I was ready to go. We all loaded into a beat-up 1986 Ford Bronco. This was when the problems began.

An hour into the trip the truck died; it just shut off in the middle of nowhere. No one brought a cell phone, so my recall roster was useless as was calling a tow truck. Around 3:00 p.m. the weather decided to add to our misery. The temperature dropped to about 20 degrees, and it began to snow—hard. Almost 16 inches of snow fell in a matter of two hours.

The snow then turned to freezing rain while the temperature went down to 15 degrees with a wind chill of minus 10. So we had four Airmen packed in a dead vehicle, with no one else in sight, little food (I was the only one to bring anything), no phone, and a foot of snow on top of us. We were slowly beginning to freeze into a giant block of ice.

Around 6:00 p.m. we heard a rumbling sound in the distance. A minivan pulled up next to us to ask if we needed help. The driver was a master sergeant, taking his family home after a day of skiing at the very resort we were trying to get to. He gave us a jump start, and after a few tries the ancient vehicle slowly returned to life.

Now this master sergeant looked us in the eyes and told us it's probably a good idea to head home. In this situation, we had two options. We could head straight back to the base to our nice warm rooms or keep going to the resort.

I specifically remember thinking, "... this is a bad idea." Thinking that maybe this was a sign of some kind, I just wanted to go home. Wanting to save face in front of the guys, I agreed to keep going.

At 7:30 p.m., we pulled up to the resort. It was still bitterly cold and now almost pitch-black. We got our gear on, rented snowboards from the pro shop, and boarded the lift up the mountain. There were a few tracks to select from, but they all looked the same to me from the height of the lift. Of course, the guys choose one labeled "intermediate."

Let me reiterate the situation. I had never been snowboarding; my first attempt was on the intermediate run; it was cold as all heck and pitch-black outside; no one had a

cell phone; and not one of us had a decent amount of food since we got stuck in the blizzard. Starting to see where this is going?

After a few tries, I began to get the hang of snowboarding, and I was able to go a little further down the hill without falling. As my head got bigger with thoughts of being a high and mighty snowboarder, my sense of judgment got worse. Somewhere down the track, I hit a small rock (hidden by the recent snowfall), which threw me into a bigger rock on the side of the track.

I was knocked out cold for 10 minutes before I tried to sit up. I was so dizzy, I could barely stand, much less walk. Finally, as the throbbing in my head subsided, I took a few steps to try and find my board and my friends. The first step was okay. It was on my second or third step I realized something was wrong with my ankle, and I collapsed back down to the snow-covered ground in agony.

There I was stuck in the snow, with no phone, and my friends had probably already made their way to the bottom of the track to enjoy hot cocoa in the lounge. I sat in the freezing cold all alone with an injured ankle, a monster headache, and a terrible feeling of hopelessness. I screamed for help for what seemed like an eternity. I don't remember much else before I passed out again.

A few hours later, I woke up in the local emergency room to the relieved faces of the guys I went out with, my supervisor, and the first sergeant. Turns out that one of the guys I was with realized I was missing and called the proper authorities. They found me lying face up, half buried in snow. In the end, I walked out of the hospital (on crutches) with a sprained ankle, a concussion, and minor frost bite on my fingers and toes.

Turned out, I was only stuck there for 2 hours, so you can see how fast the

harmful effects of winter's cold can set in. When I returned to my duty section a week later, I was called into the commander's office for a little talk. My supervisor and flight chief were behind me as the commander began his briefing.

The first thing he asked me was what I could have done differently to prevent this accident. It all came to me in a rush, in what alcoholics refer to as "a moment of clarity." Maybe I should have told the guys that I had never been snowboarding before. Maybe I should have called my boss to let him know where we were going. Maybe we should have heeded the warnings from the master sergeant who said it was a good idea to head home.

All in all, the experience taught me valuable lessons. The next time your commander or supervisor gives you a briefing on winter safety, it's probably a good idea to pay attention and take those words to heart because they can save your life. ❄️



Oh, Deer!!

Driving Tips You Can Live With!

BY ANONYMOUS



While driving to work one cold morning in January, I had what I hope was a once in a lifetime experience. I rounded the flight line on base and entered into a densely wooded area. Without notice, a deer darted into traffic. Although I was driving cautiously and within the speed limit, there just wasn't any way to avoid it. I hit the deer head-on killing it instantly. My fellow early morning commuters stopped to ensure I didn't need any medical attention and called the Security Police. One driver, who I assumed was an avid hunter, stopped and requested authority to keep the deer for the meat.

Although it was a startling experience, and one I never want to experience again, I learned a valuable lesson. It's just human nature to grow comfortable within one's daily routine and become complacent while doing everyday activities. I learned that I needed to be more aware of my surroundings and watchful for wildlife, and other driving hazards, even while on base.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, there are more than 1.5 million deer-vehicle collisions each year resulting in approximately 150 deaths, thousands of injuries and over \$1 billion in vehicle damage.

The majority of vehicle accidents involving deer occur from October to January, which is the deer migration and mating season. As we approach the winter months, please take the time to follow the simple safety precautions listed above.

In summary, watch out for deer because they aren't watching for you. Drive Smart, Drive Safe, Drive Sober! 🍷

Routine Safety Precautions:

- Always wear your seat belt.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Don't use your cell phone and drive and no texting.
- Maintain safe speeds, taking into account both weather and road conditions.
- Keep a watch out for wildlife, especially while driving through wooded areas.
- At night, when there is no opposing traffic, use high-beams to illuminate the deer's eyes.

When Approaching A Deer:

- Reduce your speed and sound the horn to scare the deer away from the roadway.
- If the deer doesn't react to the horn, pull over and turn on your hazard lights. Wait until the deer leaves the roadway before proceeding on.
- Do NOT attempt to drive around the deer!!
- Do NOT swerve to avoid the deer. If a collision is going to happen, you need to be in complete control of your vehicle when it does.

If Your Vehicle Does Hit A Deer:

- To avoid any further injuries, stay in your vehicle. Do NOT approach an injured animal.
- Watch out for more deer, they usually travel in groups.
- If the injured deer is blocking the roadway, contact local law enforcement or the forestry office immediately.

Snow plows can definitely remove some snow, but so can snow blowers and snow shovels. There are dangers with using each of these pieces of equipment and we want to highlight some of those dangers and give you some suggestions to prevent injuries. Let's start with huge trucks with huge blades going down streets or in parking lots full of cars and possibly kids. The men and women performing these tasks are usually up very early to try and clear the runway, taxiways, parking ramps, roadways, parking lots and all other areas as prioritized by the base's snow removal plan. One of the best things we can do is to stay out of the way and give them the right of way. Also, make sure your kids are off the street when they are coming down the road!

BE SEEN.

STAY OUT OF THE WAY OF SNOW PLOWS



Can the snow plow driver see you?

Driving a 30-ton, loaded snowplow requires full attention and special driving skills. Driving behind or near a snowplow requires patience and some common sense. Following is a list of reasons why not to crowd the snow plow:

- Avoid a shower of road salt.
- Give peace of mind—Let the snowplow drivers concentrate on clearing the roadway and worry less about tailgaters.

- Improve visibility—Like other big trucks, snowplows have poor visibility on the sides and behind the vehicle. Remember that if you can't see the driver's side mirrors, he or she can't see you.
- Increased stopping distance—Maintaining at least three times the normal following distance gives you plenty of time to slow down.

**IT'S A SNOW PLOW.
IT'S HARD TO DRIVE.
IT'S BIGGER THAN YOU.
GET OUT OF ITS WAY.**



According to the 2009 US Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 6,000 people were injured using **snow blowers**.

Severe cuts and broken or crushed bones are often the injuries and actually two-thirds of the injuries involve fingers and commonly lead to finger amputations.



Injury Causes:

- Snow clogging the exit chute of the machine
- Not noticing that the impeller blades are still rotating even though the machine is off
- Attempts to clean the clogged chute with hands
- Hands connect with the rotating blades

If your snow blower jams:

- Turn it OFF!
- Disengage the clutch.
- Wait five seconds after shutting machine off to allow impeller blades to stop rotating.
- ALWAYS use a stick or broom handle to clear impacted snow.
- NEVER reach down the chute or around blades.
- Keep all shields in place.
- Keep hands and feet away from all moving parts.
- **DO NOT DRINK** before using your snow blower!

Shoveling Snow – The most common injuries associated with snow shoveling include sprains and strains, particularly in the back and shoulders. You can minimize the risks by:



Choosing a good shovel

Look for one with a curved handle to minimize how much you have to bend.

Warming up

Walk & stretch before you begin.

Avoid twisting

Try to push snow instead of lifting and throwing it to the side.

Using your legs

If you must lift snow, lift with your legs and not your back.

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

Just working, walking, playing or even being outside during cold inclement weather can be a hazard in it self. All of our jobs take us outside and into the environment. Whether it's just to walk across a parking lot, onto a sidewalk and into a building or whether it's to climb an antenna to repair a piece of equipment. ACC suffered nine on-duty mishaps/injuries last year during the winter months resulting in 32 lost workdays. All the mishaps were a result of workers slipping and falling either on snow/ice covered stairs or just barely ice covered pavement (black ice). Injuries ranged from broken hands/wrist to strained backs/knees. All nine of these mishaps could have been prevented if someone would have taken the time to clear away the ice and snow. If you're the first one at work in the morning, shovel that snow and/or throw down some ice melt. Be prepared the night before, have the supplies you need already in your building. Obviously slow down, take small steps, use handrails and use extreme caution when walking and working anywhere around the base!



Last Year's Holiday/Winter

MISHAPS by the NUMBERS

Air Force Class A Mishaps

- 9 Class A Mishaps
- 8 Fatalities
- 1 Permanent Total Disability (On-Duty)
- Private motor vehicle mishaps accounted for five of the nine Class A mishaps.
- A positive tox test was confirmed in one PMV4 and two pedestrian mishaps.

ACC Class A-C Mishaps

- 2 Class A Mishaps
- 3 Class B
- 118 Class C

There were 123 Class A, B and C mishaps submitted during this time period. There were 20 PMV4 mishaps. Of the PMV4 mishaps there was one Class A fatality and three involved alcohol or drugs. Also during this period there were 14 PMV2 mishaps. Nine of the 14 mishaps were single vehicle mishaps that involved operator error. Alcohol or drugs were a factor in two of these mishaps. Alcohol and drugs don't mix with vehicle operations.

During this time period most of us will take some time off to visit our family, friends or to relax. Holidays are a festive time and parties to celebrate often involve alcohol. A solid plan is a must when drinking alcohol anytime. There were three pedestrian mishaps during this period. Alcohol was involved in all three and one resulted in a Class A fatality. Even a pedestrian risks his life when walking in the roadway intoxicated.

Setting physical training goals and just getting outside to enjoy activities during this time period is common. The football season is almost over, basketball is just beginning and many of us have decided to start training to meet our new goals. During this period there were nine football, three basketball one boxing and several miscellaneous mishaps. There was one fire that didn't involve cooking.

An individual placed a box on top of an electrical stove that was in the on position. The box caught fire and caused \$86K in damages to the home. Stay within your limitations when exercising, and never leave combustible materials on your stove.

Summary

PMV and sports and recreation mishaps account for the majority of our off duty mishaps and fatalities. Plan your trip before leaving. Get your car ready. Consider the weather and the amount of time it takes to travel long distances. Don't exceed your limitations when exercising. Ease into your new training goals. Never leave combustible materials on top of a stove and know what to do in the event of a grease fire. You can be festive; if you drink, do it responsibly. Have a solid plan and come back safely.



YOU MIGHT BE **THAT GUY** IF...
**NOT EVEN
MISTLETOE
WILL WORK**

A MESSAGE FOR U.S. MILITARY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. © FLEISHMAN-HILLARD

