

The Combat EDGE

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The Combat EDGE

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ACCent on Safety

WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING

Who are you? Since you are reading this article when no one is watching, chances are you care about safety. That's a part of who you are. To truly know yourself, take a close look at what you do when no one is watching. It's difficult to take an honest look at one's self. How do you spend your money, how's your integrity, do you take unnecessary risks? What do you do when no one is watching? If you drive away from a drive-up window and notice you were given a dollar too much in change, do you turn around and give the dollar back, or justify your right to keep it? After all, you'll never get caught. The same scenario is true for risk acceptance. If you're only going two blocks, maybe you decide you don't need a helmet, or your seat belt — it's too much effort. After all, no one is watching. In the end, what we do when no one is watching is who we are deep down inside.

It still amazes and saddens me when I hear of Air Force people dying needlessly because they took an unnecessary risk. Last year 19 percent of ACC's fatal mishaps involved people not wearing personal protective equipment; this year it's up to 50 percent. So far this year three fatalities involved failure to wear seat belts, and one more suspected, for a total of four compared to two last year. Also, one member was killed while riding a motorbike without his helmet, and another drowned while canoeing without a life vest. How many of these folks were told (more than once) to wear their protective equipment? All of them. Yet each person made a personal choice to accept unnecessary risk when no one was watching. Now their loved ones, friends, and work-mates must live with their decisions.

If you have read any safety material over the past few months, you've probably seen discussions on personal risk management (PRM). Within the text of PRM articles, it's often pointed out that squadron commanders, supervisors, parents, etc., are often not present to remind people of risks and hazards. People are dying alone, so when all is said and done, it's up to us to take care of ourselves. That takes discipline, and starts with a self-assessment of our behavior when no one is watching. One sure fact is that each individual is his or her own last line of defense. That line of defense begins with the question, "What do I do when no one is watching?"

Col. Greg "Vader" Alston
ACC Chief of Safety

“Know yourself and know your enemy, and in a hundred battles you will never lose.”

These words have served military forces well for hundreds of years. In the 4404th Operations Group, we know our enemy inside and out. We’ve studied him for years, analyzing his every move. He can hardly move a tank without us knowing it. We have detailed contingency plans and we’ve considered every conceivable option. But Iraq’s military forces are only part of the enemy order of battle. There are other enemy forces at work in the area of responsibility (AOR). They are covert, insidious, hard to detect, and even harder to analyze. They have been able to infiltrate our operation at times and are often ruthless. These forces have spilled our blood and chipped away at our equipment and our national treasures. They are our internal enemies; namely, human factors and the environment.

Operating from a remote location so close to a potential combat zone poses several unique human factors risks. In a situation where the day-to-day tasking is often similar, complacency is a constant enemy. Several weeks of flying the same defensive counter air profile or electronic jamming pattern can cause our Operation SOUTHERN WATCH missions to become “routine,” especially for aircrews who are over here on their second, third, or even sixth rotation. It’s easy for the word “standard” to dominate a flight briefing. Because units rotate here every 90 days, stagnation is hard to avoid; so we must constantly watch for signs of our people trying to just survive rather than thrive.

Several environmental factors are at play here as well. Extreme temperatures, long hours, and high operations tempo can easily lead to fatigue. Facilities and equipment are often “bare bones,” creating the need for some ingenuity tempered with judgment to accomplish the mission. In addition, operating from an airfield surrounded by desert poses a significant foreign object damage (FOD) hazard.

How do we attack these internal threats? I

COMBAT



INHEREN

By Col. Scott Gratton
4404 OG/CC
Dhahran

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ITLY SAFE

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believe the concepts that help us prepare for combat against our external enemies works just as well against our internal threats. In the 4404th Operations Group, our master attack plan has three fronts: creativity and innovation, sharp mission focus, and leadership by example. Our safety plan uses the same approach.

Creativity and Innovation

Our operations group receives a fresh group of squadrons and virtually all-new personnel every 90 days. We view this as a tremendous opportunity to get new ideas, capitalizing on the core competencies of each individual and unit. In combat, successful commanders see obstacles in their path as opportunities to apply the skills and talents of their people to achieve the objective. We strive to do the same during our day-to-day operations here in Southwest Asia. Flying over southern Iraq affords us the opportunity to scout out the targets we will be tasked to hit in wartime, practice attacking them, and evaluate and refine our tactics, and thereby improve our chances for success.

Honing our combat skills involves more than flying patrols over southern Iraq. We continuously employ alongside our allied partners in large-scale exercises outside of Iraqi airspace. These offer one-of-a-kind chances to maintain proficiency in those fundamental flying skills that tend to diminish over time. They also offer unique opportunities to improve our interoperability with those other forces that we will fight along with if called to do so. And they permit us to maintain peak proficiency where the rubber meets the ramp — our crew chiefs, weapons loaders, and specialists get to turn the aircraft at a high ops tempo just as we would in the beginning hours of any conflict. Innovation is encouraged throughout. The aircrews work closely with our allies in developing the exercise scenario plan. Our maintainers must overcome the natural obstacles that we find at any remote location.

The facilities' shortfalls that are to be

expected when operating from our remote desert locations have forced us to learn and apply better, more efficient techniques for getting the job done, techniques that we can use both here and at our home units when we return. It is critical, though, that we take the time to institutionalize those lessons into our daily operations. As professional warriors, we must study the experiences, successes, and failures of those that went before us and keep good records of challenges we've overcome and the solutions that worked. Our successors won't gain much if the lessons we learned are forgotten when we depart. "Make it better, make it last" isn't just a catchy phrase around here — it's the continual ramp-up in which we pride ourselves to achieve a higher performance level over the long run. Institutionally capitalizing on these lessons makes us smarter, and by definition, safer.

Sharp Mission Focus

The mission of the 4404th Operations Group is twofold. First, our daily operational sorties over the skies of southern Iraq serve to ensure compliance with the UN-mandated "no-fly" zone. Secondly, we are also here to protect broader United States interests throughout Southwest Asia. Because the threat is so immediate and unpredictable in the region, being ready for "Day One" of combat is the guiding principle in our daily thinking. We keep our operations combat-oriented by remaining steadfastly focused on the mission. This involves knowing our purpose, determining our priorities, and executing with discipline.

Daily activities and constant short-range crises make it difficult to stay focused on the long-term objectives. Every day we must ask ourselves, "Does this activity support our mission, and does it make operational and tactical sense?" If not, then we knock-it-off and get back to the basics, our purpose — the mission.

Given a clear purpose, we must then set our priorities. Preserving American blood and treasure is high on this list. Even though we are flying in a combat zone, there's never a good reason to press the limits to get an aircraft to the target. Our priority must be to improve our combat capability while at the same time safeguarding our resources so that we are ready, with all our assets, to fight when

the day comes. This means we don't need to push the weather, press our fuel, or take an aircraft with degraded systems over enemy territory. On the ground, the same principles apply. While we all must get our job done with limited resources, we don't cut corners to do it. Our priority is to do it right the first time.

Then, we must execute with discipline. We must know and follow procedures, understand the theater rules of engagement, and do what we know is right. It means sticking to the tech data; it means following the procedures that have been thought through beforehand. It boils down to being professionals — being the best at what our nation has entrusted us to do, and making sure we are here to do it again tomorrow.

Lead by Example

A safe operation starts with the individual and results in a process that minimizes risk, preserving our combat resources and enhancing our effectiveness. On the individual level, leading by example is often nothing more than knowing right from wrong, and then doing what is right. Doing not just what the books say, but also applying some simple common sense. Because we are all leaders at some time, we must know these standards and adhere to them or we begin to put our equipment and ourselves at risk. This means everyone wears a seat belt, we all do FOD checks, and we all pay attention to the details.

To channel and coordinate our personal efforts, we develop procedures. This adds teamwork and organization to our individual discipline, creating a synergistic effect. Whether operating on the ground or in the air, good discipline and solid processes are contagious, and a common thread found in any safe, combat ready unit.

In conclusion, our vision statement says it all: "To integrate deployed units into the most professional, most tactical, and safest composite fighting force in the world." Our combat capability is founded on these four mutually supportive themes — fully integrated, highly professional, tactically oriented, and inherently safe. They are the foundation that ensures success against all our enemies, internal and external. If we continue to be creative and innovative, maintain our mission focus, and lead by example, we will be inherently safe. ■

Driving at Night

Courtesy of the National Safety Council

Traffic death rates are three times greater at night than during the day, according to the National Safety Council. Yet many of us are unaware of night driving's special hazards or don't know effective ways to deal with them.

Driving at night is more of a challenge than many people think. It's also more dangerous.

Why is night driving so dangerous? One obvious answer is darkness. Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown.

Older drivers have even greater difficulties seeing at night. A 50-year-old driver may need twice as much light to see as well as a 30-year old.

Another factor adding danger to night driving is fatigue. Drowsiness makes driving more difficult by dulling concentration and slowing reaction time.

Alcohol is the single most significant factor in fatal traffic crashes, playing a part in more than half of all motor vehicle-related deaths. That makes weekend nights more dangerous. More fatal crashes take place on Friday and Saturday nights than at any other time in the week.

Fortunately, you can take several effective measures to minimize these after-dark dangers by preparing your car and following special guidelines while you drive.

The National Safety Council recommends these steps:

-Prepare your car for night driving. Clean headlights, taillights, signal lights and windows once a week, more often if necessary.

-Aim your headlights properly. Mis-aimed headlights blind other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.

-Don't drink and drive. Not only does alcohol severely impair your driving ability but it also acts as a depressant. Just one

drink can induce fatigue. Also, avoid smoking when you drive. Smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.

-If there is any doubt, turn your headlights on. Lights will not help you see better in early twilight, but they'll make it easier for other drivers to see you. Being seen is as important as seeing.

-Reduce your speed and increase your following distances. It is more difficult to judge other vehicle's speeds and distances at night.

-Don't overdrive your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. If you're not, you are creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.

-When following another vehicle, keep your headlights on low beams so you don't blind the driver ahead of you.

-If an oncoming vehicle doesn't lower beams from high to low, avoid glare by watching the right edge of the road and using it as a steering guide.

-Make frequent stops for light snacks and exercise. If you're too tired to drive, stop and get rest.

-If you have car trouble, pull off the road as far as possible. Warn approaching traffic at once by setting up flares or reflecting triangles near your vehicle and 300 feet behind it. Turn on flashers and the dome light. Stay off the roadway and get passengers away from the area.

Observe night driving safety as soon as the sun goes down. Twilight is one of the most difficult times to drive, because your eyes are constantly changing to adapt to the growing darkness. ■

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ORM:

Theory versus Practice

*By Maj. Peter Kind
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Well, since my time in the Safety world is drawing to an end, I figured that perhaps now would be the best time to tell my “there I was” story. There is quite a difference between knowledge and wisdom. If we could teach wisdom, most of us Safety professionals would soon be out of work. Here’s another story that will hopefully help a few folks learn that “fire is hot,” without having to touch it for themselves, and to grow in wisdom by learning to apply their knowledge in the right circumstances.

I had been serving as the squadron Chief of Safety for just over a year. We were a flying unit, but our squadron of about 150 people also had maintainers, intelligence analysts and, of course, the necessary administration. It was September of '97, and COMACC (General Richard Hawley at the time) had just called for an Operational Risk Management (ORM) down day. We had a string of flight mishaps in ACC during the months of July and August, and General Hawley felt it was time to take a break and refocus. ORM seemed like the right tool to do just that.

Although ORM was relatively new to the Air Force, I had all the training to date, and I prepared a bang-up presentation for the squadron (if I do say so myself). We had briefings and brainstorming sessions and ORM analyses on previous ground and flight mishaps. We spent an entire day focused on ORM in almost any on- or off-duty scenario. I had to write up our reports for higher headquarters, and if anyone in our unit had the knowledge necessary to avoid a mishap, it was I. Ah yes, but knowledge does NOT equal wisdom.

As soon as the last report cleared the commander’s okay, I was cleared to press to Scotland for the family’s annual September holiday. We had booked an apartment through the Scottish military at a great rate, and we were going to explore as much of the grand country as we could.

It was the second day of our Highland tour, and we were headed towards Inverary to tour the ancient home of the Duke of Argyle. I had the trip well planned (navigators are good at that) and we were off. I had compensated my estimated time of arrival (ETA) for the single-

lane mountainous roads, but not for the coal trucks doing their early-morning deliveries. I had a chance to pass all but one before we got into the real mountain roads. I might have gotten by that last one, but there was a wimpy driver in front of me who didn’t seem nearly as anxious as I was to overtake this last truck. Now we were crawling up steep hills with bends and turns every eighth of a mile or less, and no clear places to pass. A few quick openings presented themselves, but the car in front of me didn’t even take a serious look.

As five minutes stretched to ten, and then fifteen, my type-A personality started to get the better of me. My copilot (wife) was tuned into my growing frustration and started applying some good ORM. “Relax, honey. Just enjoy the beautiful day and this gorgeous scenery.” I couldn’t relax — I had a coal truck to pass, and all my attention was focused on finding an opening to do so... NOW! I was tired of eating diesel fuel from the truck and crawling up steep grades at 15 to 20 miles per hour. If only a straight stretch of road would come along.

Suddenly, there it was — about a quarter mile stretch of perfectly straight road and no cars coming down it! It was a steep grade, so the truck was just inching up the road, but the car in front of me did not even swing out to take a look. “Fine, lady!” I thought. “If you are not going to make a move, I will!” But now I had both the car and the truck to pass, and I probably couldn’t do it before the 90-degree turn at the top. However, after the turn, there was another quarter-mile straight stretch and I had been watching it as we climbed and had seen no other cars coming from the opposite direction. Granted, there was one little mound of earth about halfway down that second stretch of road, which I couldn’t see behind, but since I had been watching so diligently, I was sure no car had materialized. As I started to pull out of my lane into the oncoming one, my copilot once again injected her sage advice with a pointed question, “Are you SURE no one is coming?” I was committed to passing and nothing else at this point. I was 99-percent certain and responded with, “It’s clear!”

Well, the good Lord gave me one last chance to APPLY a little of this ORM knowledge I had, because about half-way up the first quarter-mile stretch, I realized I wouldn't be able to overtake both the car and the truck prior to the unknown when we made the turn at the top in tandem, blocking both lanes. There was no shoulder (or verge, as the British call it) for a margin of error, and it was solid granite on one side, and a several-hundred foot plunge on the other.

My final decision made, I floored the gas pedal to eat up as much of that coal truck as possible before I made my blind left turn. As we both rounded that corner and I could now see what was in my lane for the next quarter-mile stretch of road. My most vivid memory is the image of the smoke from the tires on that car only 100 yards off my nose. When he saw his lane filled with my Volvo and no place to go, brakes were his only option. It was slow motion at this point for me and, of course, I hit my brakes as well and dove the car back to my left lane (we are in Great Britain, remember). I narrowly missed the rear fender of the coal truck as I slid in, and I vividly remember the other car whizzing past my right-hand driver's window within inches. Now I could hear his skid as well as smell the burned rubber. I don't think anyone had time for horns.

I don't know if you've ever had one of those experiences where you feel like you wish you could crawl off to a corner and hide, but, man, did I want to disappear! My three sons all sat in the back just looking at me as if I were an idiot (which, in that moment, I was). My wife so graciously said absolutely nothing for the next several minutes. As Murphy's Law would have it, the road soon flattened out and there were numerous stretches to pass on. My self-inflicted penance required me to stay behind that lumbering coal truck until he decided to turn off. But as the other cars, which had been queued up behind me (and of course had witnessed the whole near-calamity), all took their turns in overtaking my vehicle and the coal truck in front of me, each cast withering glances in my direction. Some actually opened their mouths in shock when they saw my three young lads in the back seat. "Not only was this driver an idiot, who almost killed his wife, himself, and some innocent couple in the oncoming lane, he had three precious children

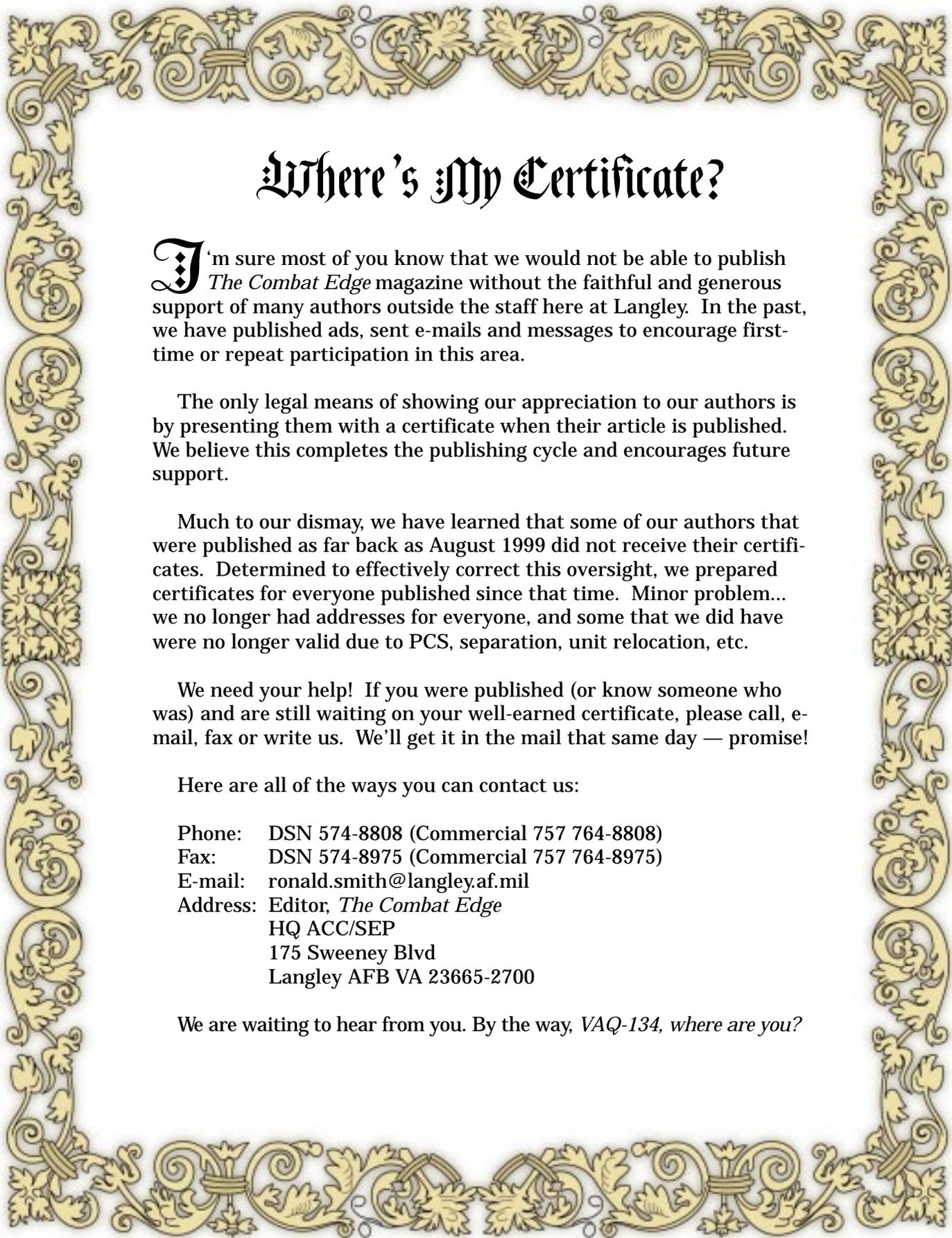
along for the sheer insanity of it." I kept receiving visions of the safety report to ACC stating how one of their squadrons' Chiefs of Safety killed himself and his entire family in the Scotland Highlands while attempting to overtake a coal truck on a 90-degree turn.

When words finally came to me, after the apologies to my entire family, I wondered at the fact that the car behind the coal truck had dropped far enough back to allow my Volvo room when I needed to dive back into my proper lane. The more I thought about it, the more I came to the realization that her use of ORM principles had not only saved my family's lives, but hers as well. If she had not dropped way behind when she saw what I was attempting, I would surely have pushed her over the cliff in my blind scramble back into that lane, and I would not have gotten out of the way of the head-on collision by mere inches.

ORM knowledge: I had a wealth of it, but I couldn't apply even the smallest amount in the right situation. I'm still here today, along with my precious family, by the grace of God alone, and by a "wimpy" Scottish lass who probably never heard of ORM, but in her wisdom knew enough to stay clear of the idiot driver trying to kill everyone on the road that day. I had firmly decided that at the first stop sign or traffic light I came to, I would quickly set the brake and dash back to her car. I would apologize, thank her, and offer her a measly £20 note to let her know I was grateful. As we neared the first small village, I checked my rearview mirror, but she was gone. She probably saved my life a second time from being hit while attempting to make-up for my first error.

The difference between knowledge and wisdom can be huge. I gained some wisdom that day that far exceeded all the knowledge I had. Experience is often the best teacher. But some of you will become wise by just hearing how foolish others can be at times. I shared this story in my next squadron safety meeting, and have used it a few times in my role as a wing Chief of Safety. Now I share it with a larger audience, recognizing the key to safety (i.e. ORM) is not mere knowledge, but the wisdom to use it at all the right times.

"Drive Safe" is not a motto, it's a practice used by the wise. ■



Where's My Certificate?

I'm sure most of you know that we would not be able to publish *The Combat Edge* magazine without the faithful and generous support of many authors outside the staff here at Langley. In the past, we have published ads, sent e-mails and messages to encourage first-time or repeat participation in this area.

The only legal means of showing our appreciation to our authors is by presenting them with a certificate when their article is published. We believe this completes the publishing cycle and encourages future support.

Much to our dismay, we have learned that some of our authors that were published as far back as August 1999 did not receive their certificates. Determined to effectively correct this oversight, we prepared certificates for everyone published since that time. Minor problem... we no longer had addresses for everyone, and some that we did have were no longer valid due to PCS, separation, unit relocation, etc.

We need your help! If you were published (or know someone who was) and are still waiting on your well-earned certificate, please call, e-mail, fax or write us. We'll get it in the mail that same day — promise!

Here are all of the ways you can contact us:

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We are waiting to hear from you. By the way, *VAQ-134*, where are you?

HURRICANE!

Part 2

Produced by the National Disaster Education Coalition, Washington, D.C.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Make a list of items to bring inside in the event of a storm. A list will help you remember anything that can be broken or picked up by strong winds. Hurricane winds, often in excess of 100 miles per hour, can turn unanchored items into deadly missiles, causing damage or injury when they hit.

Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed. Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased or damaged limbs then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through. Hurricane winds frequently break weak limbs and hurl them at great speed, causing great damage when they hit property. Debris collection services may not be operating just before a storm, so it is best to do this well in advance of approaching storms.

Remove any debris or loose items in your yard. Hurricane winds can pick up anything unsecured, creating damage to property when the debris hits.

Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts. Hurricanes often bring long periods of heavy rain. Providing clear drainage will help prevent misdirected flooding.

Install permanent hurricane shutters. Hurricane shutters provide the best protection for your windows and doors. Taping windows could take critical time from more effective preparedness measures. All tape does is help prevent glass from broken windows from scattering all over inside. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking. Cover the outside of windows

with shutters or plywood.

If you do not have permanent hurricane shutters, install anchors for plywood (mare plywood is best) and pre-drill holes in pre-cut half-inch outdoor plywood boards so that you can cover the windows of your home quickly. Mark which board fits which window. Most homes destroyed during recent hurricanes had no window protection. When wind enters a home through broken windows, the pressure builds against the walls and can lift roofs, followed by collapsing walls.

Install protection to the outside areas of sliding glass doors. Glass doors are as vulnerable as windows to breakage by wind-driven objects.

Well ahead of time, buy any other items needed to board up windows and protect your home. When a hurricane threatens, supplies are quickly sold out at many stores. Stock may not be replenished until after the storm.

Strengthen garage doors. Many houses are destroyed by hurricane winds that enter through damaged garage doors, lifting roofs, and destroying the remainder of the house.

Have an engineer check your home and advise about ways to make it more resistant to hurricane winds. There are a variety of ways to protect your home. Professionals can advise you of engineering requirements, building permits or requirements of local planning and zoning departments to provide the most effective protection.

Elevate coastal homes. Raising houses to a certain height will make them more resistant to hurricane-driven waters. There may be many local codes affecting how and where homes can

be elevated. Meet with your emergency manager or planning and zoning official for a description of the process to have your home elevated. There may also be community funds available for such measures.

If you live in a flood plain or are prone to flooding, also follow flood preparedness precautions. Hurricanes can bring great amounts of rain and frequently cause floods. Some hurricanes have dropped more than 10 inches of rain in just a few hours.

WHAT TO DO DURING A HURRICANE WATCH

Continue listening regularly to a NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or television stations for updated information. Hurricanes can change direction, intensity, and speed very suddenly. What was a minor threat several hours ago can quickly escalate to a major threat.

Listen to the advice of local officials, and evacuate if they tell you to do so. Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges. Leaving an area that may be affected will help keep your family safe. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community. Following the advice of local authorities is your safest protection. Local officials may close down certain roads, especially near the coast, when the outer effects of increasing wind and rain from a hurricane reach the coast.

Prepare your property for high winds. Hurricane winds can blow large, heavy objects and send them crashing into homes. Anything not secured may become a deadly or damaging projectile.

- Bring lawn furniture inside, as well as outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, or anything else that can be picked up by the wind.

- Make trees more wind resistant by removing diseased and damaged limbs then strategically remove branches so that wind can blow through.

- Secure building by closing and boarding up each window of your home. Remove outside antennas.

- Moor boat securely or move it to a designated safe place. Use ropes or chain to secure boat to trailer. Use tie-downs to anchor trailer to the ground or house.

Fill your car's gas tank. If advised to evacuate, you may have to travel long distances or be caught in traffic, idling for long periods of time. Gas stations along the route may be closed.

Stock up on prescription medications. Stores and pharmacies may be closed after the storm.

Recheck manufactured home tie-downs. Manufactured homes may not be as affected by strong winds if they are tied down according to the manufacturer's instructions. Properly tied down homes are more likely to stay fixed to their foundations.

Check your Disaster Supplies Kit. Some supplies may need to be replaced or restocked.

Turn refrigerator and freezer to coldest setting. Open only when absolutely necessary and close quickly. Keeping the coldest air in will help perishables last much longer in the event of a power failure.

Store valuables and personal papers in a safety deposit box in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home. Hurricanes leave much water damage inside homes. Historically, it is shown that protecting valuables in this manner will provide the best security.

Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities. Authorities may ask you to turn off water or electric utilities to prevent damage to your home or within the community. Most of the time they will tell you to leave the gas on because a professional is required to turn your gas back on, and it may be several weeks before you receive service.

Turn off propane tanks. Propane tanks may be damaged or dislodged by strong winds or water. Turning them off reduces the fire potential if they are damaged by the storm.

Unplug small appliances. Small appliances may be affected by electrical power surges that may occur as the storm approaches. Unplugging them reduces potential damage.

Review evacuation plan. Make sure your planned route is the same as the currently recommended route. Sometimes roads may be closed or blocked, requiring a different route.

Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. When you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, if you can do so safely, get out of your vehicle and climb to higher ground. Floods cause most hurricane-related deaths and most flood fatalities are caused by people attempting to drive through

water. The depth of water is not always obvious. The roadbed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. Rapidly rising water may stall the engine, engulf the vehicle and its occupants, and sweep them away. Two feet of water will carry away most automobiles.

WHAT TO DO DURING A HURRICANE WARNING

Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio, or portable, battery-powered radio or television for updated information and official instructions. Hurricanes can change direction, intensity, and speed very suddenly. Continue listening for local information.

If officials announce a hurricane warning, they may ask you to leave your home as soon as possible to be safe. Take your Disaster Supplies Kit and go to a shelter or your family contact's home. Call your check-in contact so someone will know where you are going. Local officials advise leaving only if they truly believe your location is in danger. It is important to follow their instructions as soon as possible. Roads may become blocked and the storm can worsen, preventing safe escape. Having your disaster supplies will make you more comfortable while you are away from home.

If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, on the first floor away from windows, skylights and glass doors, even if they are covered. Stay on the floor least likely to be affected by strong winds and floodwaters. A small interior room without windows on the first floor is usually the safest place. Have as many walls between you and the outside winds as possible. Sometimes strong winds and projectiles may tear hurricane shutters off, so stay away from windows even if they are covered. Lie on the floor under a table or other sturdy object. Being under a sturdy object will offer greater protection from falling objects.

Close all interior doors. Secure and brace external doors. Closed doors will help prevent damaging hurricane winds from entering additional rooms.

Have a supply of flashlights and extra batteries handy. Avoid using open flames (candles and kerosene lamps) as a source of light. Flashlights

provide the safest emergency lighting source. Between 1984 and 1998, candle-related deaths from home fires following hurricanes were three times greater than the number of deaths related to the direct impact of the hurricane. Kerosene lamps require a great deal of ventilation and are not designed for indoor use.

Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, sinks, plastic bottles, and cooking utensils. Public water supplies and wells may become contaminated, or electric pumps may be inoperative if power is lost. Survivors of community-wide disasters have said the individual's greatest need following the disaster is water.

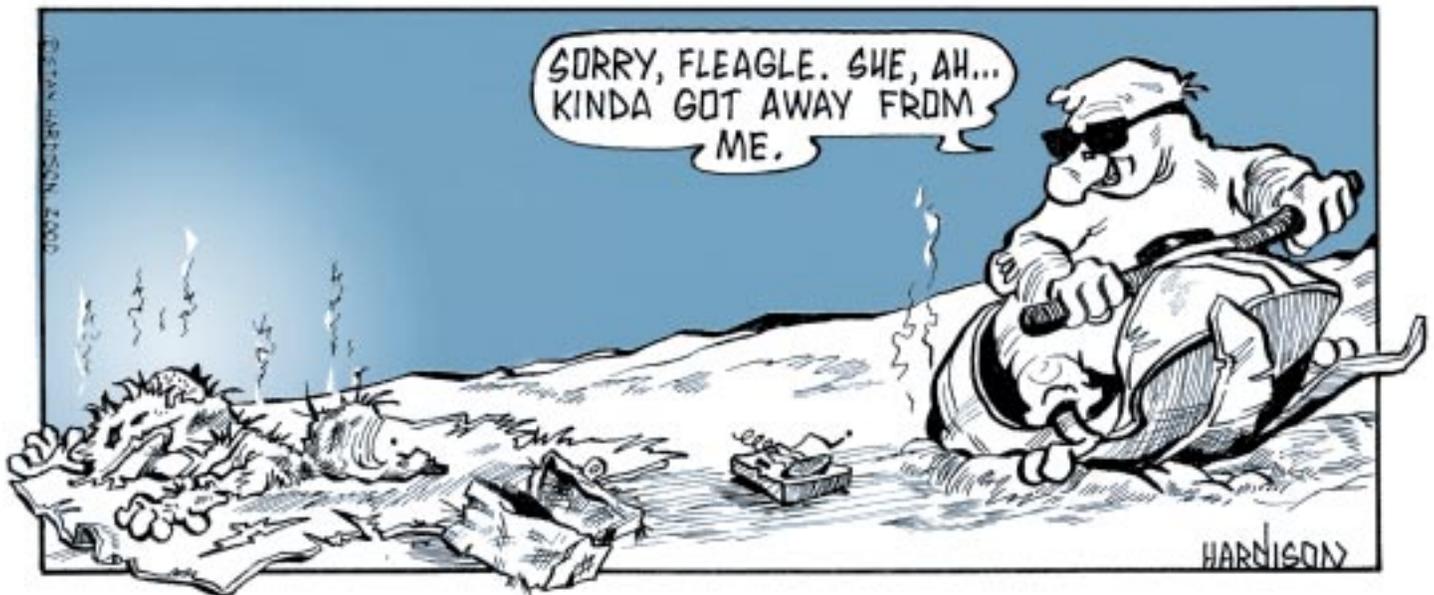
If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce the power "surge" when electricity is restored. When electricity is restored, the surge from many major appliances starting at the same time may cause damage or destroy the appliances. Turning off or unplugging major appliances will allow you to decide when it is best to turn them back on.

If in a mobile home, check tie-downs and evacuate immediately. Historically, manufactured homes suffer the greatest amount of damage during hurricanes. Prior to 1994, most manufactured homes were not designed to withstand even moderate winds.

Be aware that the calm "eye" is deceptive; the storm is not over. The worst part of the storm will happen once the eye passes over and the winds blow from the opposite direction. Trees, shrubs, buildings, and other objects damaged by the first winds can be broken or destroyed by the second winds. The opposing winds begin suddenly, and have surprised and injured many people who ventured out during the eye.

Watch out for flooding. Hurricanes and tropical storms often drop large amounts of rainfall and cause severe flooding, even when they are weakening or are no longer a named storm. "Weak" tropical storms are just as capable of producing heavy rainfall and flooding as major hurricanes.

Be alert for tornadoes. Tornadoes can happen during and after a hurricane passes over. Remain indoors on a lower level, in the center of your home, in a closet or bathroom without windows. Going below ground, such as to a basement or storm cellar, increases your risk from flood. ■



FY 99 USAF

COLOMBIAN TROPHY

This award recognizes military flight safety achievements in a tactical organization.

4 FW, SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB NC

SYSTEM OF COOPERATION AMONG THE AIR FORCE OF THE AMERICAS (SICOFAA) FLIGHT SAFETY AWARD

This award promotes safety in the Air Forces of Western Hemisphere countries by recognizing flight safety accomplishments of military organizations.

552 ACW, TINKER AFB OK

AIR FORCE NUCLEAR SURETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award recognizes an individual who has significantly contributed to nuclear surety.

SMSGT KEVIN E. BUSHAW, HQ ACC/LGWNN, LANGLEY AFB VA

AIR FORCE CHIEF OF SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR GROUND SAFETY

This award recognizes the most effective installation-level and Field Operating Agency (FOA) and Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) ground safety programs.

CATEGORY IV - 823 RHS, HURLBURT FIELD FL

Safety Awards

FLIGHT SAFETY PLAQUES

This award recognizes Air Force organizations below numbered Air Force level for outstanding mishap prevention.

4 FW, SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB NC
5 BW, MINOT AFB ND
55 WG, OFFUTT AFB NE
93 ACW, ROBINS AFB GA

EXPLOSIVES SAFETY PLAQUES

This award recognizes organizations below MAJCOM, DRU, and FOA level for outstanding achievement in, or contribution to, explosives safety.

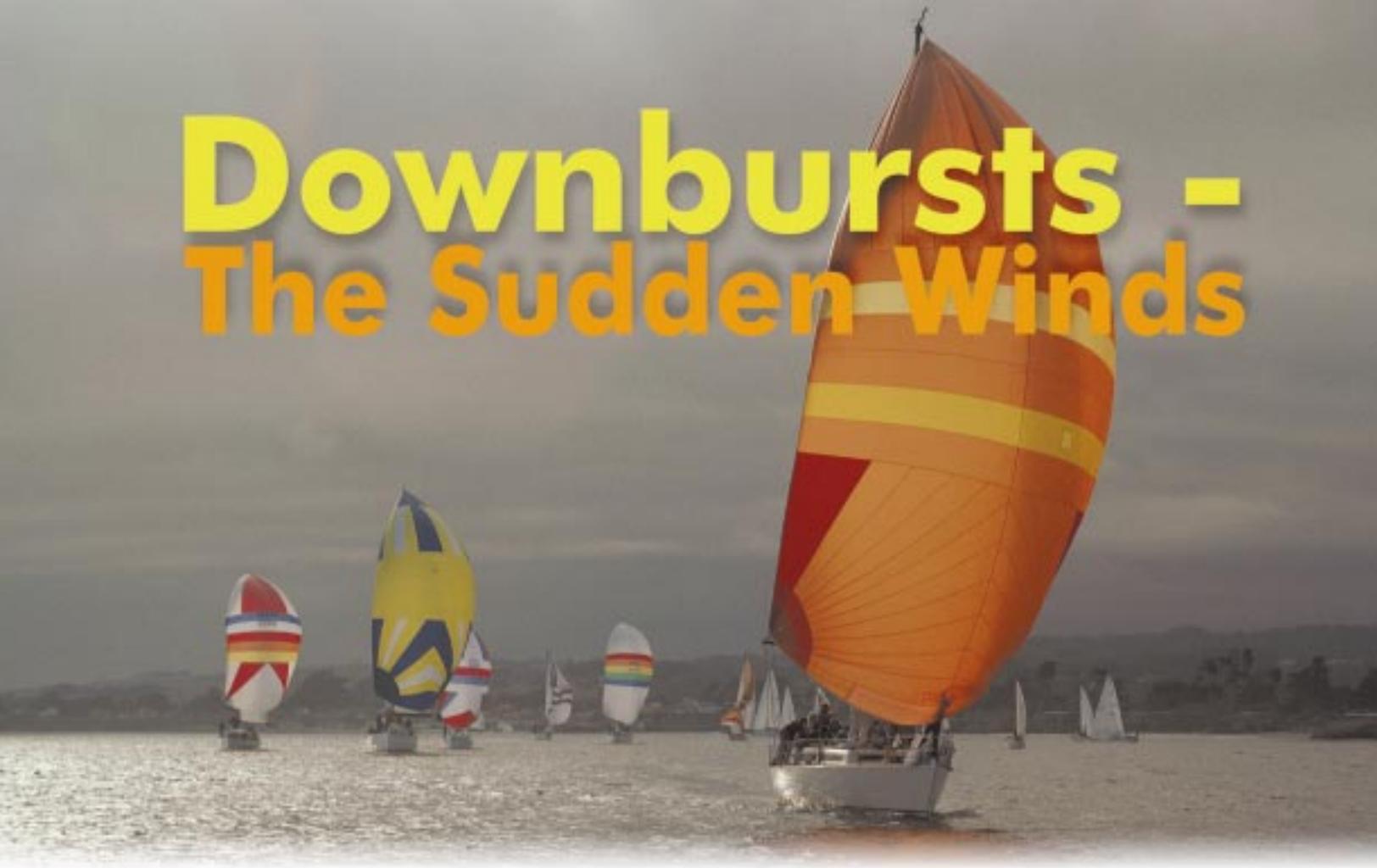
4 FW, SEYMOUR JOHNSON AFB NC
9 MUNS, BEALE AFB CA

AERO CLUB SAFETY CERTIFICATES

Safety certificates promote aviation safety and award the Air Force Aero Clubs for flight safety achievements.

BEALE AERO CLUB
BEALE AFB CA

Downbursts - The Sudden Winds



*Courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard,
Office of Boating Safety*

Perhaps you've heard news reports about the effects of "wind shear" on aircraft during takeoffs or landings. A similar phenomenon may also occur on the water and affect boats. Caused by thunderstorms, these localized, strong winds are called downbursts.

Although there are several ways in which downbursts form, they all exhibit certain characteristics:

- Winds may exceed 130 mph — much faster than even the normally gusty thunderstorm winds,
- The strong winds hit suddenly with little or no warning, and
- The strongest winds affect a relatively small area.

Downbursts come from thunderstorms. Therefore, whenever a boater encounters a thunderstorm, a downburst is possible. This is true if the thunderstorm is all by itself or is part of a series, such as a squall line.

When a downburst first strikes the surface, it is often concentrated in an area less than three miles across. This is generally where the most extreme winds can be found. The term microburst is often used in describing this phase. After striking the ground, the winds begin to spread out, eventually covering an area up to 30 or 40 miles across. However, microbursts can still be embedded in the general downburst.

Downbursts are usually short-lived high winds lasting only a few minutes. However,

one thunderstorm can produce a series of these winds affecting a swath several miles long and lasting an hour or more.

Downbursts hit so rapidly that few signs may be available to alert boaters of their presence. Blowing spray under or slightly ahead of a thunderstorm may be the only indicator. However, the best rule is to avoid ALL thunderstorms if possible. If not, expect and prepare for the worst whenever a thunderstorm is encountered.

The hazards of Downbursts are:

- Extreme, sudden winds which can tip a sailboat beyond its range of upright stability.
- Heavy seas that can capsize even powerboats.
- High winds that can blow equipment off the deck and cause persons on board to lose balance and fall overboard.

Boats caught on open water under these conditions can encounter a downburst without expecting it. Downbursts are generally short lived, lasting less than 10 minutes. This fact makes predicting their occurrence almost an impossible task. The sudden loss of the sailing vessel "Pride of Baltimore" in the Atlantic near Puerto Rico in 1986 was attributed to a downburst wind. Witnesses claim that in less than two minutes, the ship was blown over, filled with water, and sank. Although this tragedy involved a larger sailing vessel on the open ocean, vessels on inland or inshore waters have experienced similar dangers.

Thunderstorms can create several downbursts in succession, with varying degrees of intensity. A thunderstorm might even generate a combination of downbursts and tornadoes.

Weather Information

The best source of current weather information is the continuous National Weather Service broadcasts. Seven frequencies between 162.400 and 162.550 MHz have

been set aside for this purpose. However, three (162.400, 162.475, and 162.550) are the most common. Taped information is re-played approximately every five minutes with broadcasts updated no less than every three to six hours. In the event of unusual or severe weather, the programming may be interrupted by live broadcasts.

The Coast Guard also broadcasts special marine weather information, including small craft advisories, on VHF Channel 22. The National Weather Service no longer operates visual warnings. However, certain organizations have continued to display lights and flags when rough weather is expected.

Protection

- Turn your craft with the bow facing into the wind, and "reef" your sails if you have them. These actions help minimize wind resistance.
- Secure all loose object and rigging on-deck, and make certain hatches or other openings are covered.
- Wear your personal flotation device, making sure it fits securely. Keep other lifesaving equipment readily accessible, including inflatable rafts and visual distress devices.

Storm Warnings

Small Craft Advisory: Generally associated with sustained winds 18 to 33 knots, or waves hazardous to small boats. These are not issued during the winter months along the great lakes.

Gale Warning: Sustained winds 34 to 47 knots.

Storm Warning: Sustained winds 48 knots or more.

Hurricane Warning: Sustained winds 64 knots or more associated with a hurricane.

Special Marine Warning: Winds of 35 knots or more lasting generally less than two hours. These are usually associated with an individual thunderstorm or an organized series of thunderstorms (squall line, cold front). ■

Courtesy of the National Safety Council

SKATEBOARD



*Permission
to reprint granted
by the*

National Safety Council

*A membership organization dedicated
to protecting life and promoting health.*

1121 Spring Lake Drive, Itasca, IL 60143-3201

Tel: (630) 285-1121; Fax: (630) 285-1315

BOARDING

Skateboarding is a popular activity enjoyed by many young people. However, it's also an activity that causes many unintentional injuries.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), more than 80,000 persons need hospital emergency room treatment each year for injuries related to skateboarding. Fractures are a frequent type of injury. Deaths as a result of collisions with motor vehicles and from falls are also reported.

Irregular riding surfaces account for more than half of the skateboarding injuries caused by falls. Wrist injury is the number one injury in skateboarding, usually a sprain or a fracture. Skateboarders who have been skating for less than a week suffered one-third of the injuries. Experienced riders generally suffered injuries when they fell because their boards struck rocks and other irregularities in the riding surface.

The National Safety Council offers these skateboarding tips:

The skateboard/protective gear

-There are boards with varying characteristics for different types of riding; i.e., slalom, freestyle or speed. Some boards are rated as to the weight of the intended user.

-Protective equipment, such as closed, slip-resistant shoes, helmets and specially designed padding, may not fully protect skateboarders from fractures, but wearing it can reduce the number and severity of cuts and scrapes.

-Padded jackets and shorts are being made for skateboarders, as well as padding for hips, knees and elbows. Wrist braces and special skateboarding gloves also can help absorb the impact of a fall.

-The protective equipment currently on the market is not subject to government performance standards and, therefore, careful selection is necessary.

-In a helmet, for example, look for proper fit and a chin strap; notice whether the helmet blocks the rider's vision and hearing. If padding is too tight, it could restrict circulation and reduce the skater's ability to move freely. Loose-fitting padding, on the other hand, could slip off or slide out of position.

How to fall

Learning how to fall may help reduce the chances of a serious injury.

-If you are losing your balance, crouch down on the skateboard so that you will not have as far to fall.

-In a fall, the idea is to land on the fleshy parts of your body.

-If you fall, try to roll rather than absorb the force with your arms.

-Even though it may be difficult during a fall, try to relax your body, rather than go stiff.

Tips for using a skateboard

-Give your board a safety check each time before you ride.

-Always wear safety gear.

-Never ride in the street.

-Obey the city laws. Observe traffic and areas you can and cannot skate.

-Don't skate in crowds of non-skaters.

-Only one person per skateboard.

-Never hitch a ride from a car, bicycle, etc.

-Don't take chances; complicated tricks require careful practice and a specially designated area.

-Learn to fall — practice falling on a soft surface or grass. ■

WHEEL

As agile as we know our motorcycles are, there are times when two wheels simply are not up to the tasks we present to them — unless we know HOW.

For example, assume you are riding along and notice that there is a trough in the middle of the road extending as far as the eye can see. It also just happens to be about four-inches wide and about one-inch deep. Like a magnet, that trough sucks your front wheel into it, the rear wheel obligingly joins it and suddenly your wheels are trapped. You cannot steer out of it.

OK, OK, I can hear it now: “Get real!”

Fine, so it’s not down the center of the road. It’s along the side, and some people would call it a rain gutter.

- Or it is down the middle of the road, but only on the side where they resurfaced the road, so one lane is higher than the one next to it.
- Or you eased off the pavement and there was about a one-inch drop to the apron beyond.
- Or you are on a surface street and pull over to the curb and your front tire slides right up against the curb, parallel to it.

You get the picture. There are all kinds of traps out there that we don’t normally have to deal with but that can be encountered at any time, and you will have no choice but to deal with them. In every case I described above, the problem is that you must either ride up and over one side of the obstacle, or you must turn away from that obstacle — both of which turn out to be more difficult than first expected.

The problem, of course, is that you often simply cannot turn your wheel because it IS trapped. In order to turn away from a curb that your front tire is hugging, you would have to push the rear edge of the tire against the curb so that the front edge can turn away from it. A mere inch of height is sufficient to stop you cold — your bike will fall over before you can turn the wheel. In this particular case you have no choice but to stop completely, lean the bike away from the trap, and walk the bike free.

By James R. Davis



TRAPS

Never get within six inches of a raised surface that runs parallel to the direction you are moving!

If the surface is only one-inch high, you can ride over it without much concern, so long as you approach it at any meaningful angle (greater than 20 degrees). Anything higher than about one inch and you must put as great an angle of attack to it as possible. Ideally, you want to cross over it with a 90-degree (perpendicular) angle.

Always approach a trap that you must cross over with more than a 20-degree attack angle.

It is not so much that you should fear that your front tire will fail to get over the trap; it is that you must be concerned about getting your rear tire over it. Your attack angle is low, so you instinctively turn your front wheel into the trap to get over it. Your front wheel does, but your rear tire, having a lower attack angle, slides along the trap rather than going over it. This immediately twists your bike into the turn and presents an ever-increasing attack angle for that rear tire. At some point (quickly), the attack angle will be sufficient and the rear tire will grab and ride over the obstacle. Unfortunately, while it's sliding along, you and your bike turn the front wheel in the direction of the slide. Thus, when that rear tire grabs, it is analogous to the classic conditions of a high-side. About two-thirds of a second later, you will hit the ground.

Before trying to ride over a trap that is relatively close to you, turn away from it and then towards it in order to build the largest attack angle possible.

About half a second before your front tire hits the obstacle, accelerate. That unloads your front shocks. At the same time, shift your weight to your pegs and lift your butt off the seat. When the rear tire hits the trap, the rear-end of the bike will get quite a vertical jolt — possibly enough to throw you off the seat and cause you to have to fight for control if you have not already raised that derriere. ■

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MONTHLY AWARDS

PILOT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt. Robert A. Garland, Jr.
USAF Weapons School
Nellis AFB, Nev.*



On 6 Apr 2000, Capt. Garland, leading a 4-ship of F-15s on a Dissimilar Air Combat Training mission, experienced a right horizontal stabilator failure. Just after takeoff, Capt. Garland recognized a Roll Control Augmentor System (CAS) failure light and the aircraft started an uncommanded rolling motion left and right, which he corrected with stick inputs. Attempts to reset the CAS failed. Capt. Garland made a right turn to the north to clear populated areas and the aircraft started an uncommanded up and down pitching motion. Within 20 seconds, the pitch CAS fell off-line and the pitch symptoms became more pronounced. Capt. Garland attempted to correct the pitch inputs with opposite stick inputs, but the symptoms continued. Capt. Garland called for a chase aircraft to inspect his aircraft for any visible structural problems; none were observed. Capt. Garland immediately declared an emergency, slowed the aircraft below 250 knots, reduced fuel weight by dumping excess fuel, and placed the roll ratio and pitch ratio to the emergency position. Once completed, the aircraft stabilized somewhat, however, Capt. Garland was required to provide continuous control inputs to counteract uncommanded aircraft roll and pitch movement. After a controllability check and fuel down to 5,000 lbs. internal, Capt. Garland flew an 18-unit Angle of Attack approach. Throughout the landing phase, Capt. Garland had very little pitch authority, yet made a successful landing without damaging the aircraft. The approach and landing phase was uneventful primarily due to Capt. Garland's impeccable aviation skills. Maintenance performed an inspection of the horizontal stabilator and verified that the stabilator had failed. The stabilator had failed to drive to the neutral position as it is designed to do in situations like this. Capt. Garland's immediate and skillful actions in this potentially catastrophic situation resulted not only in the successful recovery of a valuable aircraft, but also prevented potential loss of life by maneuvering his aircraft expeditiously away from populated areas.

CREW CHIEF SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Master Sgt. Chris A. Ader and Tech. Sgt. Joseph R. Hudson
33rd Maintenance Squadron, 33rd Fighter Wing
Eglin AFB, Fla.*



On March 8, 2000, Sgt. Ader and Sgt. Hudson responded to a request for assistance on aircraft 80-0054 for a left main landing gear malfunction. Electro/Environmental personnel had retracted the gear in an effort to troubleshoot an indication problem and the left gear would not extend. After several attempts at normal and emergency gear extension, Aero Repair and Reclamation shop personnel were called out to assist. Sgt. Ader and Sgt. Hudson arrived on the scene and determined the left main gear had extensive damage to the up-latch hook support bracket, aft door drive rod and forward door drive rod. They summoned the fighter squadron production superintendent, briefed him on the incident and recommended further inspection of other wing aircraft. When failed up-latch support brackets were discovered on two other hangared aircraft, this immediately became an item of very high interest. Sgt. Ader promptly contacted Safety, Quality Assurance, Maintenance Squadron supervision and both fighter squadron maintenance officers. After a quick brief on the possibility of landing gear not extending in either mode with such a bracket failure, it was determined that this required urgent action. Sgt. Ader personally recommended all aircraft be held from take off at end-of-runway and those in chocks hold until inspected. A quick inspection revealed eight brackets cracked. On Sgt. Ader and Sgt. Hudson's recommendation, the 33 FW proceeded with a one-time inspection of all aircraft, discovering a total of 17 cracked brackets, some nearly at the point of total failure. Had this item remained undetected, there is a high probability that one or more of the 17

airframes would have had a major gear malfunction possibly leading to a Class A mishap. Sgt. Ader and Sgt. Hudson assisted in authoring a CAF-wide High Accident Potential message that was sent immediately informing other F-15 units of the pending failures. After a conference call with engineering, depot, ACC and the CAF, a three-phase, world-wide Urgent Action TCTO was issued, undoubtedly preventing a number of mishaps.

Sgt. Ader and Sgt. Hudson's extensive knowledge, teamwork and decisive actions averted the probable loss of multi-million-dollar aircraft and possible loss of life.

FLIGHT LINE SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Tech. Sgt. William Edelen, Tech. Sgt. Carl Fox
Airman 1st Class Jennifer Johnson, Airman 1st Class Jackie Longmire
49th Maintenance Squadron, 49th Fighter Wing
Holloman AFB, N.M.*



TSgt Fox, A1C Johnson, and A1C Longmire were performing an operational checkout of an F404 engine inside the test cell facility following extended maintenance. While performing checks at the 90-percent power rating, they experienced a total loss of electricity to the facility, including the run cab controlling the engine parameters. Sgt. Fox and crew immediately reacted to the unforeseen emergency. With the engine literally uncontrolled,

they were faced with a choice of using the emergency cutoff switch for an immediate emergency shutdown or attempting normal shutdown procedures without electrical power. Sgt. Fox did not want to use the emergency cut-off switch, unless it was absolutely necessary. An immediate shutdown while the engine was running at 90 percent would have caused the engine to seize. This could have led to catastrophic internal failure, fire, the entire loss of a \$1.4 million engine, and possible loss of life.

The crew proceeded to attempt normal shutdown procedures. With the telephones out of service and no way to summon help, Sgt. Fox dispatched A1C Longmire to the Propulsion Flight to notify the Maintenance Operations Center and request emergency assistance. Upon notification, Sgt. Edelen responded to the test cell with A1C Longmire. Meanwhile, Sgt. Fox was able to identify the tripped engine throttle control circuit breaker and repeatedly reset the breaker while inching the throttle back to an idle condition. After ensuring a proper cool down, Sgt. Edelen was able to disconnect the throttle control and manually shut down the engine. The crew then tried to determine the reason for the power outage. While checking the facility circuit breaker panel in the main control room, the crew discovered smoke coming from the Fire Suppression System Control Panel. A1C Johnson stood fireguard until emergency response crews arrived. The emergency response crews from the Holloman Fire Department and Base Civil Engineers attributed the loss of power to some power lines blown loose by recent high winds. The loose power lines reduced a normal three-phase circuit down to a single phase, creating an overload to the entire facility electrical system.

The quick thinking and timely actions of Sgt. Fox and crew prevented the catastrophic failure of an F-117A engine asset valued at \$1.4 million, a test facility valued at over \$3 million, and even worse, the potential loss of human life.

WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Master Sgt. Jeffery A. Swanson, Tech. Sgt. Christopher A. Skelton
Staff Sgt. Henry P. Garcia, Senior Airman Charles Greer
144th Fighter Wing
Fresno ANGB, Calif.*



The Fresno California Police Bomb Squad suffered a loss of explosive items just before the dreaded Y2K hour. The items were stolen from the police storage bunker located in Auberry, California. Explosive items stolen included C-4 plastic explosive, Det Cord, dynamite, grenades, gunpowder, and several other types of explosives. The event received nation-wide media exposure because these explosives could be used as part

of anti-American terrorist plots over the New Year.

The Fresno California Air National Guard, 144th Fighter Wing, was contacted shortly after the robbery. They were requested to store those items not taken by the perpetrators because of the ability to house remaining munitions in a secured environment. A State Mission number was assigned by the Governor, allowing the remaining munitions to be stored temporarily in the Munitions Storage Area. Five suspects were located, arrested and confessed to the break-in and robbery. As part of their confession, they divulged the location of several sites at which they had stored the stolen items.

On Thursday, 6 Jan 2000, Fresno County Sheriff's Department contacted the 144th EOD, requesting assistance in identifying and possibly rendering safe military ordnance and securing evidence associated with this robbery. Sgt. Swanson, Sgt. Skelton, Sgt. Garcia, and Ann Greer (144 FW EOD troops), packed up their gear and headed for a mineshaft in Burrough Valley, California. In conjunction with area authorities, they helped with the aid of an underwater camera to identify a World War II 3.5-inch Bazooka Rocket in two pieces, along with the bolt cutters used during the break-in. On Friday, 7 Jan 2000, after 20,000 gallons of water had been pumped from the mineshaft, Sgt. Swanson, wearing a harness, was lowered to the bottom of the shaft where he recovered the inert bazooka round, bolt cutter, and two skulls. Luckily, they were only animal skulls.

Due to the professionalism of the 144 FW EOD personnel, they were able to render the area safe, recover evidence associated with a Federal Crime, and determine that the bazooka round was inert.

GROUND SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Staff Sgt. Leo C. Wheeler, Jr.
944th Maintenance Squadron, 944th Fighter Wing
Luke AFB, Ariz.*



On 3 Nov 99, Sgt. Wheeler was rebuilding a Low Pressure Turbine (LPT) on a Pratt and Whitney 220 engine. During assembly of the 4th stage disk, he noticed a balance weight was loose and pulling away. He also saw the rivet attaching the balance weight was being pulled through the disk. Technical data did not have any reference on this area, as it is depot repair only. Sgt. Wheeler brought this to the attention of his supervisor, Quality Assurance, and a Pratt and Whitney field service representative. Pictures were taken and forwarded to San Antonio-Air Logistics Center (SA-ALC) and Pratt and Whitney at West Palm Beach, Florida. After a review by SA-ALC, they sent the tools and gave the unit permission to perform depot-level repair. Sgt. Wheeler replaced the rivet and returned the LPT back to service.

Had this not been caught, the balance weight could have liberated and done major damage to the engine. This incident and Sgt. Wheeler's actions were also included in a 'Catch Of The Day' article in the 20th Anniversary Pratt and Whitney Product Support Quarterly (PSQ) Magazine. Sgt. Wheeler's attention to detail possibly saved an engine or aircraft from major damage.

AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Recognizes an aircrew (two or more individuals) for outstanding airmanship.

UNIT SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Recognizes a unit (squadron-level and below) for sustained performance or a one-time act in preventing mishaps that do not fit the criteria for other safety awards.

Some deserving individual or team could have been featured here!

Flight Safety Stats

ACC & ACC-Gained Losses for FY00

1 Oct 99- 1 Jul 00
Class A Flight Mishaps

8 AF	
9 AF	
12 AF	
AWFC	
ANG	
AFR	
Aircrew Fatalities	

Class A - Fatality; Permanent Total Disability; Property Damage ≥ \$1,000,000

* Non-Rate Producing

CRASH!!

By Lt. Pete Wojihowski
944th Fighter Wing, Luke AFB, Ariz.
Reprinted from THE COMBAT EDGE, Jan 96

Seat belts save lives and prevent injuries. This is a proven fact. However, since FY 92, the non-use of seat belts by Air Force members has been increasing. In FY 95, 45 Air Force people were killed as a result of 4-wheel vehicle mishaps. Seventeen of the 45 who died were not wearing their seat belts — 38 percent non-use! DoD and USAF instructions mandate 100-percent use of vehicle-equipped occupant protective devices (seat belts, shoulder harness, etc.) by military members regardless of duty status, yet 38 percent of the Air Force's fatalities failed to comply. We are negligently killing Air Force people. It should be readily apparent that the simple action of "buckling up" will save lives!

Here is the story of one of those who survived not buckling up.

It was graduation day from high school and the entire class of 33 graduates held an all-night party at the ocean. As the sun was just starting to rise over the water, everyone was asleep on the beach. Two guys, who were best friends and had come to the party together, decided it was time to go home and get a few more hours sleep before starting their summer jobs as service station attendants. The driver felt a little sleepy as he headed down the road. Suddenly, the passenger screamed as the driver narrowly missed a rather large oak tree while speeding along at 50 miles per hour. Confident that this near collision would keep him awake, the driver continued down the road breathing a huge sigh of relief. Approximately five minutes later, while making a right-hand turn coming out of town, the driver once again nodded off. This time the passenger was also asleep. **CCRRRAAASSSHH!!!** The car hit a small oak tree at approximately 10 miles per hour. The driver sustained only minor injuries, despite hitting the steering wheel with his upper jaw and nose. He was

wearing his seat belt. The passenger, however, was not wearing a seat belt and went through the windshield. He ended up in front of the car, on the grass lying in a pool of blood. His injuries included a concussion, severe lacerations to the face and a sprained knee — all from exiting the vehicle headfirst. The passenger eventually recovered from his injuries, but only after months in the hospital. The passenger was lucky. If the car had been going 10 miles per hour faster, he probably would have died. I think about that many times. You see, I was the driver of that vehicle.

Whenever you drive, please wear your seat belt and insist your passengers wear theirs — it could make a difference in your life too!

How's ACC Doing?

Fiscal Year 2000

Of the 54 total vehicle mishaps experienced as of 1 Jul 00, ACC has had 6 fatalities. Three involved PMVs and three were in GMVs. In two out of the three GMV fatalities, no seat belts were used. No seat belts were worn in the three fatal PMV mishaps.

Fiscal Year 1999

During the same period last year, ACC had 80 total vehicle mishaps with the same amount of fatalities. Only one fatality occurred in a GMV.

Although this year's total number of mishaps is lower than last year's, the rate of fatalities involving ACC personnel not wearing seat belts has increased by an alarming rate. In many cases, other occupants in the mishap vehicles were wearing their seat belts... and they survived.

**It's time to "Buckle Down on Safety"
and "Buckle Up for Life!"**

Why are waves of high-visibility seat belt enforcement necessary? Shouldn't officers enforce the law all of the time?

Law enforcement officers do enforce seat belt laws just as they enforce other traffic safety laws. However, under routine enforcement activities, often the only person who knows police are enforcing occupant protection laws is the person receiving the citation. To reach high-risk drivers — like teenagers and young adult men — law enforcement must make real the possibility of receiving a citation for not buckling up or for transporting an unbuckled child. Regularly scheduled, highly publicized waves of enforcement send a strong message that everyone must be buckled up. No exceptions. No excuses.

Won't encouraging officers to step up enforcement lead to increased harassment, especially of minority drivers?

Harassment is clearly unacceptable. It should not be tolerated, and it must be addressed. However, over a 13-year period, there is no indication that strong safety belt laws and stepped up enforcement of those laws has resulted in harassment. In fact, more and more states are adopting standard seat belt laws and conducting enhanced enforcement of those laws to save lives. As Delegate Joanne Benson, an African-American legislator from Maryland, recently said, "Primary seat belt laws save children, no matter what color they are."

Actually, African-Americans stand to gain the most from increasing seat belt use. According to a study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, African-American youth are 50 percent less likely to buckle up than their white or Hispanic counterparts. Since wearing a seat belt increases the chance of surviving an accident by nearly 45 percent, African-American youth are more likely to die in an automobile crash. In fact, the Injury Prevention Center of the Greater Dayton (Ohio) Area reports that African-American males are three times as likely to die in an automobile crash than are white males.

What more can be done to get children buckled up?

Although there are laws in all 50 states that require children to ride buckled up, research

indicates that the presence of these laws alone is simply not enough to protect children.

National crash data indicates that drivers who don't buckle up can have a dangerous impact on children. According to the research, when a driver is buckled up, children riding in that same vehicle are buckled up 94 percent of the time. However, when a driver is unbuckled, children are buckled up only 30 percent of the time.

The impact that adult belt use has on children is the single most compelling reason why we need primary or "standard" adult seat belt laws and high visibility enforcement of those laws. Weak adult belt laws don't give law enforcement the tools necessary to protect children.

Currently, 17 states and the District of Columbia have standard enforcement seat belt laws. Several other states have bills pending to upgrade their seat belt laws.

Why put resources into stepping up enforcement when all that might be necessary is a fresh approach to seat belt education?

Safety belt use has remained level over the past four years despite regional, state and national education programs stressing critical health and safety messages relating to safety belt and child restraint use. In fact, public opinion studies show that people know that they "should" wear seat belts and have very high retention of recent public service announcements about seat belt use. However, current research also indicates that many of those who report that they rarely or never wear seat belts hold fatalistic views, believing that if they are going to die in a crash, safety belts will not affect crash outcomes.

Unfortunately, the threat of serious injury or even death isn't enough to persuade some people — especially young people who believe they are invincible — to always buckle up. The only proven way to get these higher risk drivers to use seat belts is the real possibility of a ticket and a fine. ■

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