

The Combat EDGE

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HOME, AND BACK

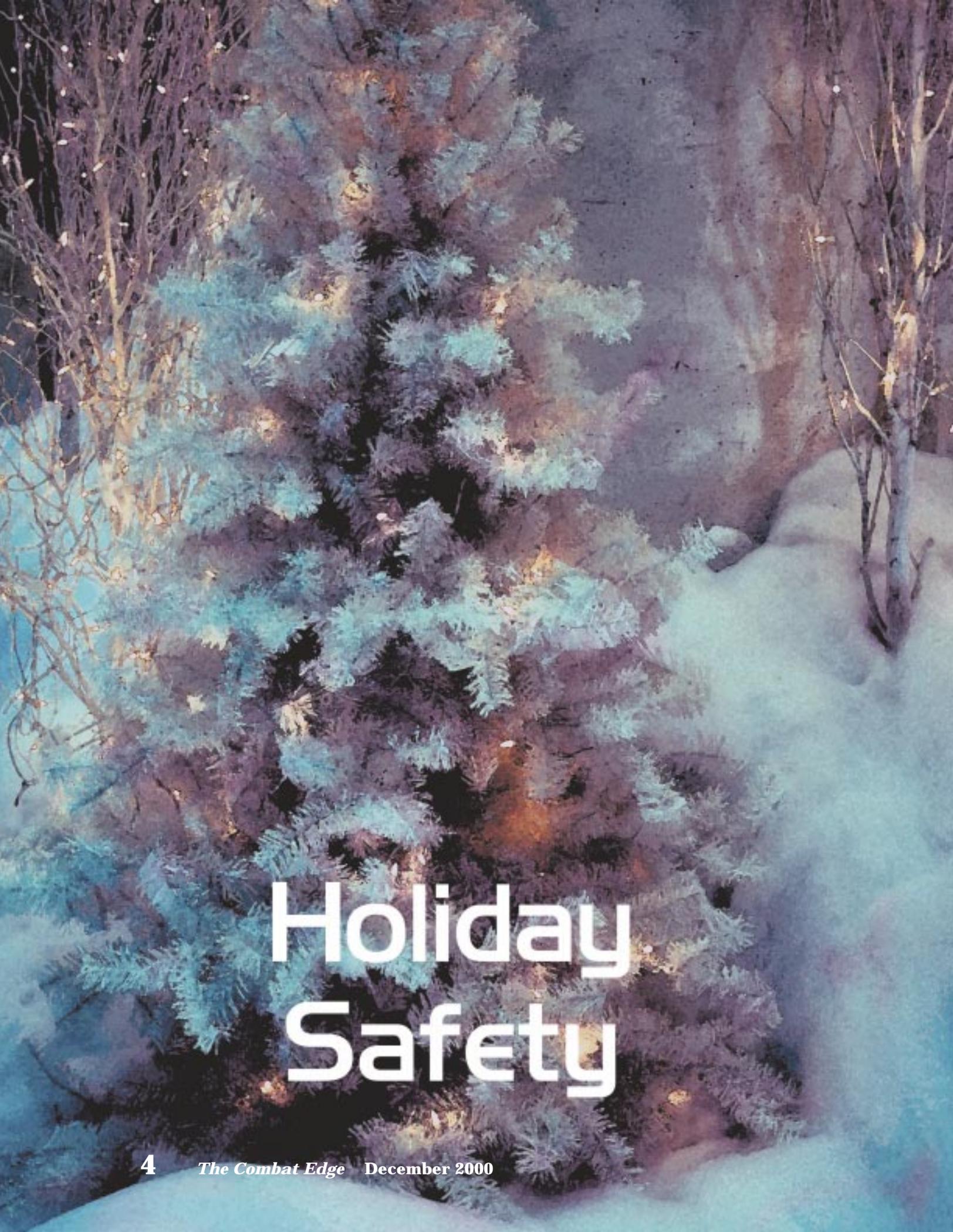
Yes, I'm still harping on holiday safety. But my harping is for a reason. If even one person doesn't make it back on January 2nd, we have all failed.

Most people in Air Combat Command will either be going home or having visitors for the holiday season, and harsh winter weather and other holiday hazards are definite threats to your and your loved ones' safety. Most safety topics are obvious to the casual observer. Traveling for long hours on the highways poses apparent hazards, such as fatigue, heavy traffic, and icy roads. Dry Christmas trees can catch fire and result in a major catastrophe. Skiing when one is not in proper physical condition to safely do so can end in lost duty hours. And let's not forget those who are lonely during the holidays, and may be subject to depression. You must recognize potential hazards and take action to secure the safest holiday season possible.

Last December a young airman made it home for the holidays safely. He traveled in a safe manner, didn't break a leg while skiing, and didn't burn down the house via a dry Christmas tree. All of his holiday safety measures were effective. However, while driving at a high rate of speed with his cousin, the vehicle went out of control, killing both occupants. Just focusing on holiday safety issues is not enough; personal risk management should NEVER leave your crosscheck. You alone are your last line of defense for survival. You live or die by the choices you make. Your choices will determine whether or not you make it back safely from holiday travels. Choose wisely.

Happy holidays. See you when you get back.

Col. Greg "Vader" Alston
ACC Chief of Safety



Holiday Safety

*By Mr. Tom Hudson
8th Air Force Ground Safety
Barksdale AFB, La.*

The holidays make this season one of the most festive and celebrated times of year. For some this can be a season of enjoyment. Yet, for others it can bring on depression due to build-up of additional stress. Faced with the extra shopping, crowded stores, long lines, traffic, and more, some people will become distraught over how to please and plan for their loved ones and friends. For some of our troops, stress factors will likely occur due to other reasons. Many will face their first holiday away from home and be homesick and/or frustrated because they couldn't afford the trip back home. Some will be stressed by a shortage of funds to purchase gifts, being needed to stay at work to perform duties, or various other details that come with the season. Of these, our homesick co-workers are probably the most vulnerable to the season because their minds are elsewhere, and that lack of focus often results in mishaps. As commanders and supervisors, we must not forget to watch these folks.

As a safety professional, I cringe at the thought of the approaching holidays. Numerous mishap reports have crossed my desk in the first month of past years, and this year will likely be no exception. Historically, the majority of serious mishaps occurring over the Christmas and New Year's holidays involve private motor vehicles. Some of the factors in these mishaps include fatigue due to long-distance driving with insufficient rest, alcohol consumption, speed, or a combination of all three.

Although most Air Force fatalities result from vehicle mishaps, some do occur during other type activities. Most other injuries result from sports and recreational activities, and occasionally will result in a fatality. However, a mishap does not have to result in a fatality to be disastrous. A serious injury to a loved one or close acquaintance can be devastating to a family member or co-worker, especially during this festive season.

One thing we must always remember is that a mishap resulting in a fatality or injury

can occur at any time or place if one is ill-prepared or complacent. There's no set pattern in a mishap, except that someone made a mistake in some form. If people plan their activities properly, using operational and personal risk management techniques (ORM and PRM), chances are the results will be positive. If they do not plan, the results could be disastrous, and memories of such disasters could ruin many holidays to come.

There are some things you can do to make your holiday season more enjoyable, as well as safe. Here are some proper planning techniques:

1. Rather than wait until the last minute, start your shopping early to ensure you get that perfect gift without the accompanying holiday hassles. This relieves anxiety and possible stress build-up.

2. If you are traveling for some distance, plan your trip well in advance. Tune your vehicle, inspect the tires (don't forget the spare!), pack first aid and roadside emergency kits, allow for sufficient travel time, and get proper rest. Watch the weather conditions just before and during the trip, as these can change quickly during the winter season.

3. Remember your newly assigned co-workers who are away from home for the first time. Let them know you care, and assist them when and where you can to ensure they have a safe and memorable holiday season.

4. Always remember that mishaps can and do happen when we least expect them — and that they can happen to you, not just other people.

5. Finally, never mix alcohol with operating a vehicle, and always wear your seat belt!

With proper planning, each of us can make this a most enjoyable holiday season without lasting regrets. We at the "Mighty Eighth" Safety division wish each and every one of you, our Air Force family, a most enjoyable holiday season. Take care, and we'll see you next year! ■

SEARCHING FOR ORM



*By Captain Matt Schuster
142nd Fighter Wing Chief of Safety,
Oregon Air National Guard*

Learning to expect the unexpected is one of the fundamental lessons of flight safety. Countless stories in *The Combat Edge* have illustrated this basic premise. A recent mishap investigation taught me that it is still true.

During my first month as Chief of Safety, I was asked to be the investigating officer on a Class B mishap at my wing involving the structural failure on the wing of an F-15 and

the subsequent loss of several parts of the aircraft. The events that took place immediately after the incident and during the early part of the investigation opened my eyes to the numerous safety considerations surrounding “safety investigations.” In this case, the investigation posed more safety hazards than the incident itself.

The mishap sortie started out normally. Briefed as a two-ship mission qualification

training (MQT) tactical intercept sortie, the flight was comprised of two experienced pilots, both with more than 1,500 hours in the F-15. Due to generally poor weather and the lack of close airspace, the jets were configured with two external wing tanks. This configuration had been used for the last several years during the fall and winter months. The flight to the airspace and first G-awareness turn was normal. During the second G-awareness turn the pilot felt/heard a huge bang and saw a fireball engulf his left wing. He terminated the maneuver and discovered that the left pylon, fuel tank, and captive AIM-9 missile had ripped off the jet. The leading edge of the left wing was damaged with a 2-by-8 foot gouge and fuel was streaming out. The pilot determined that the aircraft was controllable and did a great job bringing it back for a successful landing at the home field.

After he landed, the jet was impounded and the wing damage inspected. Part of the attachment system was still connected to the airplane, and one could see several places where the metal fractured as the pylon ripped loose.

It quickly became apparent that, to determine what had happened, we needed to recover the parts that fell off. We also needed to recover several sensitive components from the captive missile.

Thankfully, the incident occurred over unpopulated and rugged terrain, so no one was hit by the falling debris. Unfortunately, no one saw where the parts landed either. There were, however, several witnesses of the explosion as the tank ripped loose. As the phone calls from witnesses began pouring in, we began plotting their position and the direction they were looking when they saw the explosion. We compared this information with inertial navigation system (INS) data from the mishap aircraft, which allowed us to plot a crude triangulation of the possible position of the missing parts. We decided that, due to the remote and rugged nature of the terrain, a helicopter search would be the most expeditious way to find the components.

The first step was to enlist the help of our

neighboring HH-60/C-130 rescue unit. They volunteered the use of a helicopter the same day as the incident, so we began the search. The pilot flew a grid pattern while five sets of eyes, including two pilots from the unit, searched the rugged terrain for the fallen parts. After two full days of searching, it became apparent that the trees were too tall and dense to let us find the parts from the air. A ground search party would be required. (As an aside, if you ever need to hide in the woods, disguise yourself as a gray F-15 fuel tank.)

We assembled a six-man search party and tried to take all of the gear we thought we might need, including maps, global positioning system (GPS) units, radios, cell phones, survival gear, foul weather clothes, water, food, etc. At dawn we drove the two hours from the base to the mountains where the parts had fallen. Since the incident occurred several miles from the main road, we transitioned to a series of narrow, steep and muddy logging roads. The narrow, steep and muddy aspects would have been manageable were it not for the fully loaded tractor-trailer trucks full of logs coming the opposite direction. After several heart-stopping truck confrontations, we reached a turnout where we would begin our search.

The weather was lousy; 40-50 degrees, raining, with low ceilings — typical fall weather in the northwest. We checked our radios and cell phones. Not surprisingly, the cell phones wouldn't work. The radios worked fine when we could maintain line of



sight. Unfortunately, the terrain was incredibly steep, and line of sight lasted about 10 minutes. We split up into three two-man teams and started off. The anticipation of a quick find made the first hour or so seem to pass rather quickly. The next two days did not pass that quickly. A bunch of relatively out-of-shape, middle-aged men learned that those mountains are a lot steeper than they look from the air. The water we brought and the Gore-Tex foul weather gear served us well. Unfortunately, we saw nothing of the missing components.

Our first break came when a motorcyclist almost ran into the nose of the external fuel tank while riding along a logging path. He immediately recognized what it was and called the local sheriff, who then contacted us. I learned a big lesson in how powerful the media is. Since the incident, the local news had been covering the search attempts and had made the situation widely known to the public. Hence, a gray, cone-shaped piece of metal in the middle of the woods was readily identified as part of an F-15. The piece was found less than two miles from where we had been searching. It was back to the woods to try again. We packed up all of our gear and headed back out to the site. We retrieved the piece of nose cone, thanked the motorcyclist and resumed our search. Another two days of up and down the hills but still nothing. At this point the frustration level was pretty high, so we decided to take a day to regroup.

Break number two. Two hunters stumbled across the remaining components within a mile of where we had been searching! This time, the media got to the hunters first and they made the top story on the local

news. The next day we rounded up 10 people from the base (and 10 sets of all the gear described above!) and headed out. Our plan was to use several long pieces of wood to make a cradle and carry the components out of the woods. We met the hunters at the entrance to another logging road. They assured us that the parts were within “a



quarter mile” of the logging road and that “it wasn’t very steep.” That quarter mile turned out to be about a mile and a half, and the “not too steep” was true, if you were a mountain goat. The whole entourage, complete with cameramen from several TV stations, followed the men down the steep mountainside in waist-high brush. After 45 minutes, we found the components and quickly removed and secured the seeker head from the CAP-9. Amazingly, the parts were dented and bent but, except for the missing nosecone on the fuel tank, intact. We tried to move the 1,000-pound collection of parts, perched precariously on a steep slope, in the rain, in the thick brush, and actually laughed out loud at how stupid our plan now seemed. I gave the 40-pound seeker head to my trusty ground safety manager, and we retreated back up the hill to the vehicles.

Time for another plan. The helicopters had failed as a method of searching for the pieces due to the dense canopy over the forest. They

would, however, be perfect for retrieving the parts. Through some strong persuasion by the wing commander, our HH-60 neighbors agreed to provide a helicopter and four para-jumpers (PJs) to execute the pick up. We gave them good GPS/map coordinates and agreed to meet at the site at a specified time. We would have two PJs on the ground with us while two rode in the helicopter. They would lift the components off the mountainside and place them on the back of a flat bed truck waiting in a clearing a few miles away. The weather, which had been our nemesis during this entire ordeal, once again did not cooperate. The ceilings were even lower than normal and the wind and rain had picked up considerably. When it looked as though there was no way it was going to happen, the helicopter literally appeared out of the mist.

Since the retrieval of the parts was so critical to the investigation, the O-6 board president decided to personally supervise the attachment of the lifting harness and lifting operation from the steep mountainside. He would later confess that while this sort of thing looks easy in the movies, it is in fact an

inexact science, complete with wildly swinging heavy pieces of metal. The rotor wash caused the large (almost 20-foot long) pieces to oscillate violently. They were eventually able to get everything off of the mountain side and to the flatbed. The process of trying to lower the pieces onto the flatbed truck reminded me of a steer-roping competition. Several of us held guide ropes attached to the pylon/tank combination and stabilized it as the helicopter lowered it on the back of the truck. Mission accomplished.

What is the moral of all of this?

OPERATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT!

In a time of intense activity or crisis we may find ourselves in an unfamiliar situation. We may be asked to do things that we are not trained to do — things outside of our routine. If your original plan doesn't seem to be working, step back and take a closer look at your surroundings. Seek expertise when appropriate and try to foresee difficulties before they happen. Use common sense to balance the needs of the mission with the need to keep your people and yourself out of harm's way. ■



Alone for the Holidays



During my first unaccompanied overseas tour, I had the unpleasant experience of spending my first holiday away from home as a young airman. It wasn't bad enough that I was already homesick for my family back in North Carolina, but to double that with missing Thanksgiving and Christmas...! I couldn't take leave since I had burned-up all I had before arriving in August, and my funds were also shot from mailing gifts back home. During the holidays, my shop was running below minimum manning to maximize the number of folks allowed to take CONUS leave, and still allow time off to personnel who had their families with them in Japan. Sitting in my office wondering what was happening at home, I received a work order to deliver some live 500-pound MK-82s to the flight line for uploads. One glance out the window reminded me of why I was sitting in the office in the first place: more than a foot of freshly fallen snow was menacingly awaiting me. Normally, delivering the load would be a two-man operation, but since there was only one other person on duty that day, we'd have to go through all the trouble of securing the building if we both left. So I decided to head out alone. Besides, I really wasn't in the mood for company.

Getting out to the munitions storage area was uneventful. The snow was kind of pretty and reminded me of snowy holidays at home, which made me feel even more upset. My troubles began as I tried to attach the bomb trailer to the pintle hook of the tow vehicle. After slipping, falling, and nearly dropping the trailer hitch on myself, I eventually hooked the trailer up with the tow

truck. Looking back, this should have been my first indication that I should radio for assistance, but I pressed on anyway.

Arriving at the aircraft spot, I noticed the load crew was as undermanned and miserable as I was. This operation was going to take about three times longer than normal! Not wanting to spend any more time out in the cold than I had to, I decided to help out the load crew by prepping the bomb trailer for them. It's rather simple: attach the two rail extenders to the side of the trailer and roll the bomb out onto the two extenders for the load crew to pick up. After unloading one side of the trailer I moved around to start on the other, distractedly reminiscing the whole time about what I was doing this time last year with my family. I began pulling the bomb onto the rail extenders when I happened to notice something on the other side of the trailer... one of the rail extenders was still stowed!

Although times have certainly changed since then, with policies to prevent such oversights, the underlying threat for similar incidents still exists. Supervisors and managers are now more likely to keep their units staffed at that magical 10-percent manning during holidays. More than ensuring proper manning, they also ensure the proper skill levels are available for all shifts. But what else is there to check for? Even if the manning and skill levels are ample and scheduled, what about that young airman away from home for the first time? What about the one whose funds fell short, so he/she had to stay on the duty roster? And how about the one who couldn't get leave because of manning problems? Surely their immediate frame of mind isn't going to be on the mission, or following that technical order word-for-word. They too will find themselves wondering what's happening at home during

*By Master Sgt. John Capers
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the holidays, and that thought could occur during a critical step of an operation. From experience, we know that we can't totally eliminate those wandering minds, but as leaders we have to find avenues to divert those thoughts and keep people focused on the job at hand for a while longer.

There are many people who will search for ways to keep our younger personnel from spending a lonely holiday in the dorms. But just as importantly, we have to keep them focused on the task at hand while they are on the job. As you build your holiday manning game plan, here are a couple of suggestions to help focus attention on job-related tasks:

Routine Self Inspections

This may seem like you're being the holiday grinch, but by knowing there will be no break from inspections, your crews are more certain to have all required equipment and publications on hand. If you detect crews that are not in compliance with standards and correct those behaviors, you are reinforcing the ones that are keeping the standards high.

Join the Crew

Get out from behind that desk and read that technical order. Here again, you're reinforcing the standard. If you're there with them, you'll have direct reinforcement that your crews are in compliance and following the publications as required. Your involvement in sharing their "misery" will do wonders for morale, as well.

I'm sure your staff can think of more techniques to ensure personnel are in tune with the task at hand. Getting them all involved in the game plan not only enhances their buy-in, but clearly puts out the message that no one is expected to just "zombie up" and comply.

And don't forget that these reminders aren't only applicable to the younger personnel. What about yourself? What about the

other responsibilities you are still accountable for; or how about a review of your own holiday mindset? While personal risk management techniques are on your mind, now would be a good time to shine the light on yourself. If you're not able to go home on leave for Thanksgiving or Christmas, will you make a concentrated effort to focus on your duties, or are you secretly likely to dwell on your own situation?

Maybe you're going to be part of a minimally manned shop during this holiday, and working a roster position on your own. If no one is watching, will you purposely overlook that one long section in the technical order and go on to the next step, perhaps rationalizing based on your vast experience?

In our business, dealing with munitions, weapons, and weapon systems, a simple mistake or oversight at any level can be very costly... in dollars and in health. During this holiday season, take time to pause and think about what effects a mistake on your part could have on your mission, your career, your family, and your life. Kind of scary isn't it?

So you're probably wondering what happened with that live 500-pounder I was about to drop on myself at the beginning of this article... Well, as luck (or divine intervention!) would have it, the tie-down attachment for the bomb somehow hooked into the main rail, preventing me from pulling it completely onto the one rail extender. It took me a while to realize what had happened — and what almost happened! Experience is a great teacher, but coupled with a traumatic experience or near miss, you have an even greater motivator. You would NEVER find me now without some sort of reference manual, or daydreaming on the job! I was lucky during my moment of crisis. Will you or your troops be able to say the same? ■



*By 1st Lt. Erin Bradley
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"Yard Sale" IN WINTER

For those of you who are snow skiing enthusiasts, you probably know that a “yard sale” is a somewhat affectionate term for what it looks like when people “wipe out” and their skis, poles, and anything else not super-glued to them goes flying everywhere. Well, I’d like to tell you a little story about my first yard sale last winter.

I had planned it for months — the perfect New Year’s celebration to enter a new millennium. I organized a trip to Switzerland so a group of friends and I could ski the Alps and enjoy the beauty of a foreign countryside. I found cheap plane tickets and rented a cozy little house in a town called Interlaken. I had only skied twice before, in Colorado, and I could hardly wait to see what the Alps were like.

After a long and exhausting trip via various planes, trains and automobiles, we finally found our destination, and planned to get an early start on the slopes the next day. Despite the fact that, between eight of us, only two of us knew some German and French, we made it to the resort in the morning and rented our equipment with relative ease. Now we were ready for action!

Since five people in our group were beginners, they opted to spend the morning taking a skiing lesson. It is always a good idea to learn from professionals, versus friends, if you have the opportunity, since they are used to dealing with beginners and are more likely to effectively teach you the things you need to know, which a friend may take for granted. So, the rest of us hopped on the train for the intermediate slope at the top of the mountain.

We spent our first few runs getting a feel for the slopes, and after those went smoothly, we decided to get a little more ambitious. Now I’ll admit that I was the least experienced of the three of us, but when it comes to any sort of challenge, I am the least likely to back down. So when my boyfriend, Harry, and our friend Dane

took off like rockets, I huffed and puffed in determination to keep up. Well I was pretty proud of how I was doing and was just starting to feel like Olympic skier Picabo Street, and then it happened. Harry had apparently gotten a ski caught on a mogul as he rounded a hair-pin turn and, frustrated, decided to lay there in the snow while he figured out what went wrong.

He only managed to get a few seconds of rest and contemplation before he was interrupted by me zipping towards him screaming, “HAAAARRRRRRYYYYY!!!” I don’t know if I was expecting him to suddenly gain superhuman powers and simply spring out of my way, but I knew that I was going too fast and I saw him too late to maneuver around him. The last thing I remember were his big, brown eyes staring at me like a deer in the headlights before... THWACK! A yard sale.

We were lucky in that he only came away from it with a bruised elbow and I came away with only a bruised ego, but it could’ve been far worse. Of course, the situation didn’t improve when an Austrian couple felt it was their duty to stop off and chew me out in German for running over him (folks, if you didn’t see what happened, it’s probably best to stay out of a situation, unless you’re just offering help). Feeling embarrassed and upset that I couldn’t “explain” to that nice couple what had happened, I ended up getting angry with Harry for being in my way and making me have my first fall, thus breaking a perfect ski record. In actuality, though, I was just venting my frustration for pushing myself beyond my limits when I should’ve known better. Once the snowy dust settled, I apologized and we went back to trying to enjoy the day, but I was certainly “skiing scared” for a while after that. I had a couple more solo falls that day, but felt better by the next day, enough to start enjoying myself again.

The next day, however, brought a bit of a role reversal. My sister, Susan, is much

like myself in that, once she graduated her beginners' class with honors, she was ready to roll with the rest of us. So, since Harry was more experienced than I, and had the objectivity of not being related to his pupil, he offered to take her under his wing. I was really proud as I watched her courageously attempt and manage everything we were doing. Every time she fell, she got back up laughing (other than confidence, a sense of humor is about the best thing you can have going for yourself when you're trying to learn something new), and kept cranking, with Harry close behind her.

She finally rounded a sharp, steep turn, however, and suddenly became a human snowball. As Harry rounded the turn he saw nothing but a white tornado, until... THWACK! Another yard sale. Harry had reacted swiftly enough to where he didn't hit her hard, but Susan was pretty battered from her fall, and her confidence was definitely shaken. She managed to make it the rest of the way down the mountain, but after that I thought it was best for us to head to the inn to rub down our sore muscles and enjoy some refreshments while Harry and Dane headed back up the mountain for one more run.

In every situation we experienced during that ski trip, we came away from it having personally learned something new. We were all very lucky that trip and, for the most part, had a great time, but here are some important points you should remember so you and yours can enjoy that first or next ski trip safely.

* Always check and double-check your and your buddies' equipment, especially after taking any sort of spill. First of all, make sure that you have the right equipment, such as protective gear, ski boots that fit correctly, and skis appropriate for your skill level. If your skis are loose, your goggles are fogged, etc., this will obviously reduce your ability to maneuver safely. Either fix these problems yourself, have a friend help you, or, if neither of you can remedy whatever problem you encoun-

ter, take a ski lift or beginners' slope back to an equipment shop and have them help you out. Better to miss out on a little ski time and enjoy the rest of your time more, versus constantly worrying about your equipment or possible injury.

* Know your skill level. Start at a pace with which you are comfortable, and then gradually increase. Make sure that you and your companions are skiing in areas appropriate for your skill levels, so you are not startling people as you zip by, nor getting in the way of more experienced skiers. If you DO happen to fall, unless you are seriously injured, try to get up and out of the way as soon as possible to avoid the risk of other skiers hitting you. You can always rest on a snow bank off to the side while you regain your senses.

* Maintain situational awareness of the people around you. If you get overzealous you can lose situational awareness, and end up hurting yourself or someone else. This is especially true if you are trying to help someone who is at a lower skill level. While your intentions may be admirable, you need to keep a safe distance between yourself and the fledgling skier. Chances are, they're going to take a few spills, and when they do, you want to be in a position where you can help them, versus crashing into them. Also, you need to ensure that you are teaching them on a slope based on their skill level.

* Know your physical limitations. If you have been skiing for a long period of time and your muscles are tired and sore, then your reflexes and reaction time will obviously be slower, and your flexibility and skills are generally reduced. Know when to call it quits. You will enjoy the next time you ski much more if you avoid injury and do not push yourself to the point of soreness and fatigue.

* Know your mental limitations. When most people take their first serious fall, it's a frightening experience, and they there-

fore tend to “ski scared” for a while afterwards, until they’ve built their confidence back up. Don’t try to push yourself or anyone else to “suck it up and move on.” Once you have had one accident, you are more likely to have another one because you are skiing scared. Take your time to readjust and ease back into things, and if you’re just mentally exhausted, then maybe it’s time to take a hot cocoa break or quit for the day.

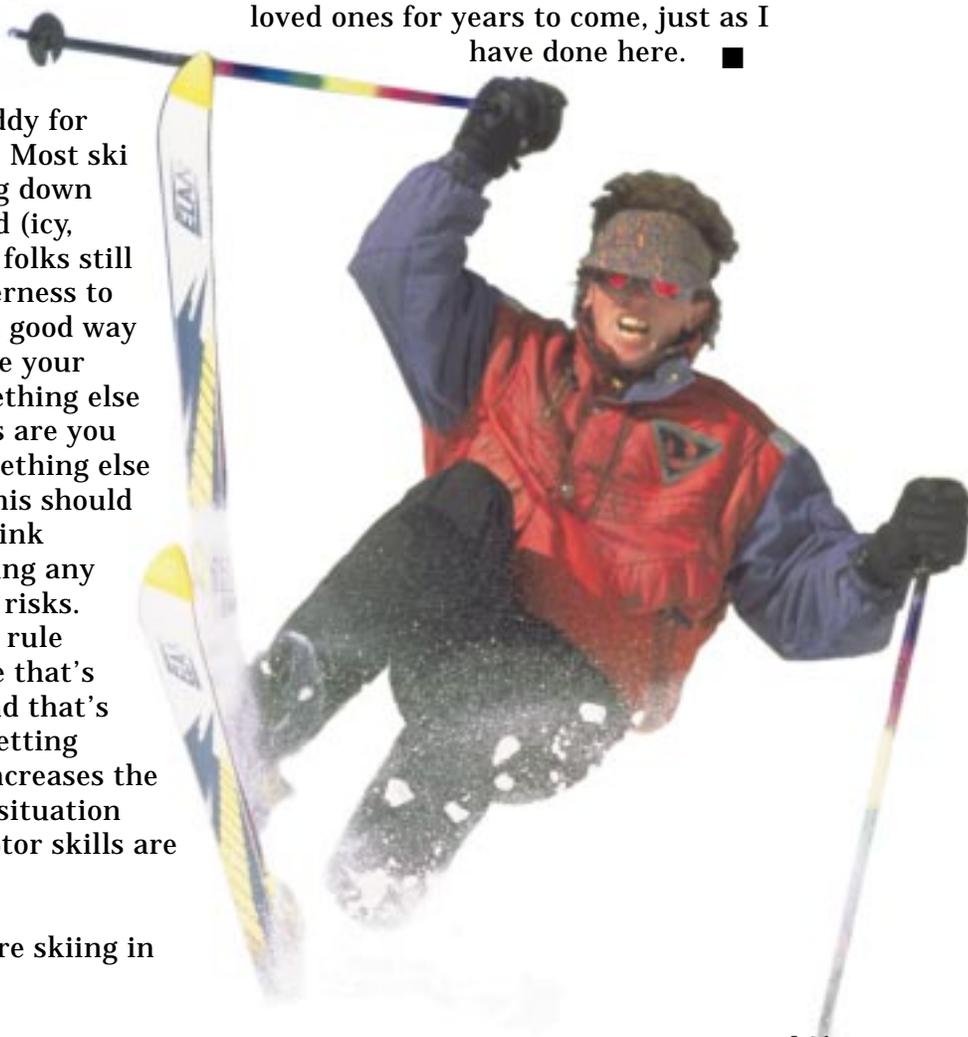
* Recognize and respect your environment. If you see a sharp, narrow curve coming up, slow down! No matter what your skill level is, you have no idea what could be right around that corner, leaving you little to no reaction time. I can tell you from experience that running over your “significant other” puts a serious damper on the festive holiday mood.

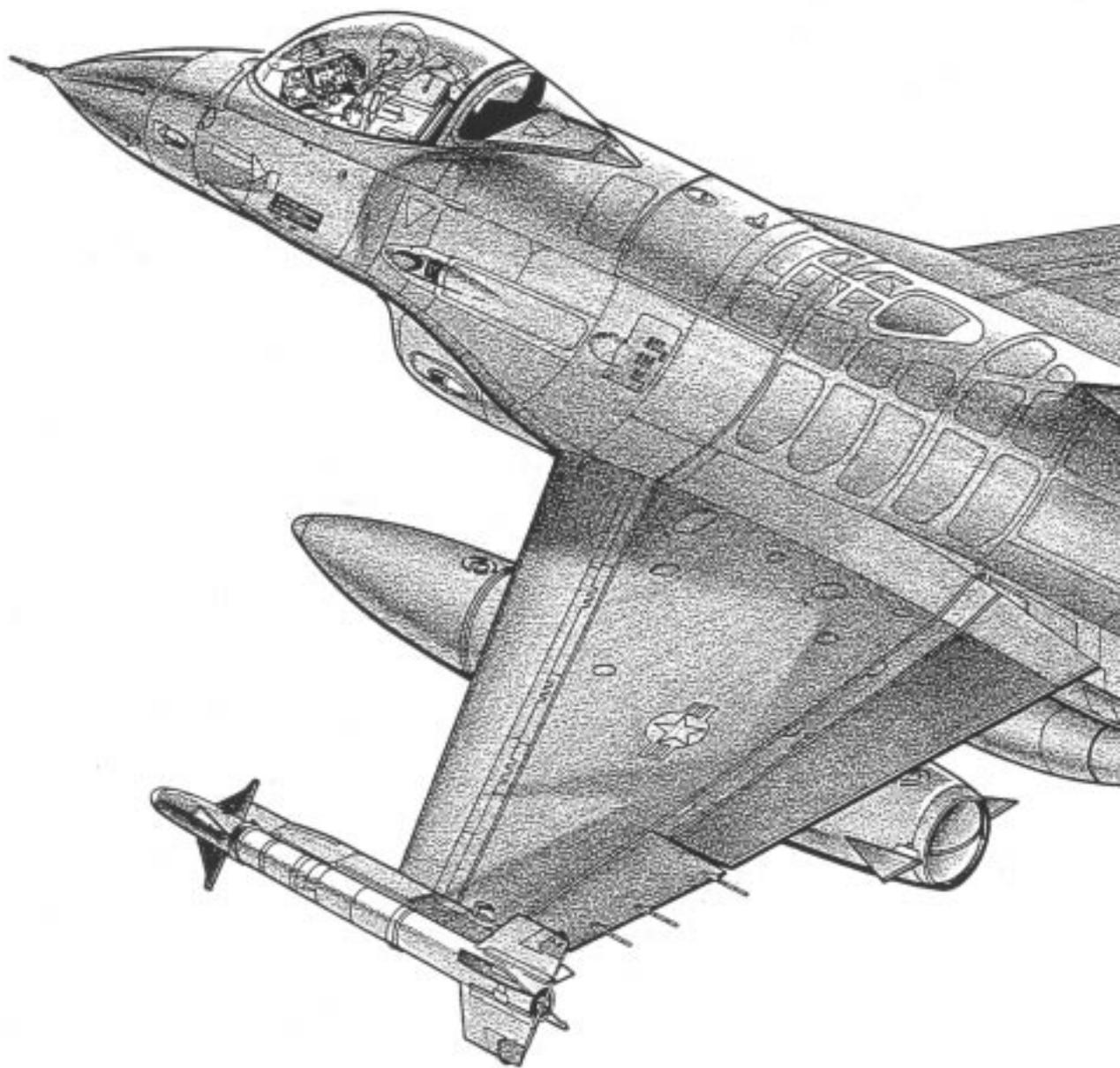
* Use common sense. Though some of you may be skilled skiers and prefer to enjoy your sport alone, the majority of people should stick with a buddy for safety’s sake, as in any sport. Most ski places are good about shutting down when the weather gets too bad (icy, poor visibility, etc.), but some folks still like to head out into the wilderness to test Mother Nature. This is a good way to make that skiing experience your last. If lousy weather or something else unexpected comes up, chances are you and your friends can find something else interesting to do. Also, and this should go without saying, NEVER drink before or during skiing, or doing any kind of activity with inherent risks. A lot of people think that this rule just applies to driving because that’s what they hear about most and that’s when they’re worried about getting caught. The fact is, alcohol increases the risk of injury or death in any situation where strong and efficient motor skills are necessary.

* Plan your route. If you are skiing in

an area that is unfamiliar to you, make sure that you’ve checked a map of the slopes, and keep one with you to avoid getting in a situation you can’t get out of (like having to ski down an “expert” slope as a beginner because you missed the nearest ski lift).

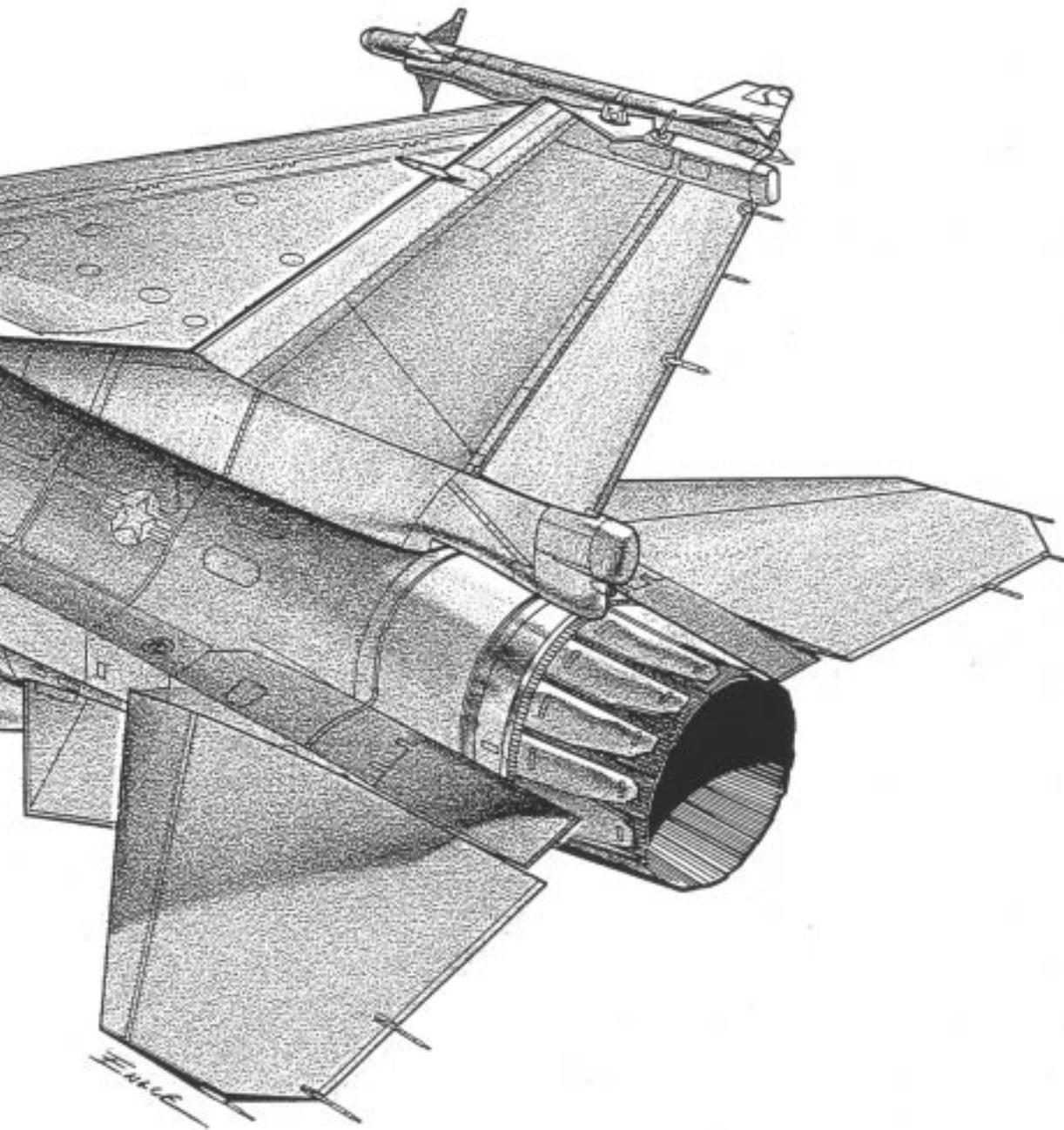
As with any other sport or activity, skiing is best enjoyed when it’s done safely. I’m always excited about trying new things, but to do so requires planning, and is most enjoyable when the “something new” you’re trying is not new to one of your buddies. I learned a lot on that trip, about skiing, living with a large group and dealing with each others’ quirks, international travel, my pride and limitations, and more. We all had our ups and downs, but that trip will remain, for all of us, a fond and incredible memory. The best part, though, is that we’re all still around and intact so we can tell stories of it to our loved ones for years to come, just as I have done here. ■





F-16 Fighting Falcon

The F-16 Fighting Falcon is a compact, multi-role fighter aircraft. It is highly maneuverable and has proven itself in air-to-air combat and air-to-surface attack. It provides a relatively low-cost, high-performance weapon system for the United States and allied nations. In an air combat role, the F-16's maneuverability and combat radius exceed that of all potential threat fighter aircraft. It can locate targets in all weather conditions and detect low flying aircraft in radar ground clutter. In an air-to-surface role, the F-16 can fly more than 500 miles (860 kilometers), deliver its weapons with superior accuracy, defend itself against enemy aircraft, and return to its starting point.



General Characteristics

Length: 49 feet, 5 inches (14.8 meters)
Height: 16 feet (4.8 meters)
Wingspan: 32 feet, 8 inches (9.8 meters)
Speed: 1,500 mph (Mach 2 at altitude)
Ceiling: Above 50,000 feet (15 kilometers)
Range: 2,000 miles

Armament: One M-61A1 20mm multi-barrel cannon with 500 rounds, up to six air-to-air missiles, conventional air-to-air and air-to-surface munitions and electronic countermeasure pods.

MONTHLY AWARDS

AIRCREW SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Capt. Alex Franco, Mr. Larry Waters, Mr. Sal Bonacasa, and Mr. Ben Collins
82nd Aerial Target Squadron
Tyndall AFB, Fla.*



Mr. Waters was the primary remote controller for an unmanned QF-4 live-fire mission from Tyndall AFB. During the remote takeoff, the drone experienced rapidly divergent pitch oscillations immediately after becoming airborne. Mr. Waters quickly selected the backup autopilot flight control system and judiciously applied moderate stick inputs to prevent ground impact and aircraft stall. He regained drone control at a very high pitch attitude, low speed, and very low altitude. While Mr. Bonacasa (the remote

controller on the mobile station) called out airspeed and altitude from his console, Mr. Waters focused his attention on drone attitude and error messages being downlinked. He quickly analyzed the malfunction and determined the only way to control the drone was in back-up mode, using only electro-mechanical servo-actuators, which were designed for use as a last resort to control the drone. Mr. Waters dumped fuel to reduce gross weight and performed a controllability check, while a QF-4 chase ship provided descriptive communications concerning drone configuration. After a quick ORM session between Capt. Franco (the drone mission commander), Mr. Waters, Mr. Bonacasa, and Mr. Collins (also a mobile controller), it was determined that an unacceptable risk was present for an automatic computer-controlled landing. All participants agreed that a manual landing by Mr. Bonacasa and Mr. Collins from their mobile control unit on the droneway would mitigate the risk to an acceptable level. Although the landing would be attempted in the worst possible flight control situation (back-up mode with electro-mechanical servos only) with crosswinds hovering near the limits, the risk of crashing the drone on landing was low, as drone mobile controllers are very well trained for these conditions. Mr. Waters completed the remaining checklist items and handed off the drone to the mobile controllers 22 miles from touchdown. Mr. Bonacasa and Mr. Collins expertly landed the drone manually, in some of the most challenging flight conditions ever experienced with the QF-4. The potential for the above emergency situation was identified over a year ago, and procedural steps were implemented to allow the controller to quickly analyze the situation and take appropriate action. The above situation proved the effectiveness of this process. The swift reactions, application of ORM and crew resource management principles, and the outstanding drone systems knowledge of Mr. Waters, Mr. Bonacasa, Mr. Collins, and Capt. Franco prevented the loss of a USAF test asset.

CREW CHIEF SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Tech. Sgt. Marshall G. Thomas
393rd Bomb Squadron, 509th Bomb Wing
Whiteman AFB, Mo.*



Sgt. Thomas was the assigned crew chief preparing a 393rd Bomb Squadron B-2 Spirit for a local training sortie. Sgt. Thomas was tasked to perform aircraft panel, inlets and exhausts, and crew compartment foreign object inspections. While checking under the pilot's ejection seat in the crew compartment for foreign objects, Sgt. Thomas noticed that one of the seat's detonation transfer assembly (DTA) lines did not look quite right. The DTA lines control the sequence of events between ejection initiation and catapult firing (initial force required to eject the seat from the aircraft). He noticed that the tape on one of the lines looked a little thicker than the rest. Sgt. Thomas notified egress personnel and upon closer inspection they determined that the line was crushed, rendering it unserviceable and requiring replacement. Had this discrepancy gone undetected, the pilot's ejection seat would not have worked properly during an emergency egress of the aircraft. Sgt.

Thomas heightened awareness of the other crew chiefs by conducting a training session pointing out the problem area. His dedication paid off one week later when one of those crew chiefs, while performing a preflight inspection, discovered another damaged DTA line. This latest discovery led to an operational stand down of the entire B-2 fleet in order to determine the cause of this unsafe condition. Engineers from Tinker AFB determined that, as the lines got older, they began to sag and get pinched in the seat tracks, resulting in the lines being crushed. This discovery led to a locally manufactured L-bracket installation to prevent the lines from sagging into the seat tracks. Sgt. Thomas' keen attention to detail identified a potentially life-threatening discrepancy that jeopardized the very lives of the pilots they were created to protect.

WEAPONS SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Tech. Sgts. Brian W. Mathis and Robert L. Heimerl, and Staff Sgt. Jason B. Stoops
77th Bomb Squadron, 28th Bomb Wing
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.*



Sgts. Mathis, Heimerl and Stoops identified a safety hazard during a post-load inspection of a fully loaded 28-station conventional bomb module on a B-1B aircraft. While performing the weapons status check on the aircraft, the load crew detected an erroneous bomb quantity indication. They knew this was inconsistent with the bomb configuration, so they decided to troubleshoot the problem further. Investigation revealed a "FFFFFF7FF" computer code: A-2 swing arm was not in the correct position. The crew performed a visual inspection for broken wiring on the A-2 swing arm switch and did not identify any electrical problems. They decided to download the bomb module and send it to the armament flight for

further inspection. The module was checked out in the back shop by armament technicians and the switch on the swing arm A-2 failed. If the aircraft would have flown with the bomb module loaded with 28 MK 82, severe damage would have occurred to the bomb module as well as the doors and the side of the aircraft. The extensive B-1 systems knowledge, willingness to exceed requirements, and decisive actions of all three members of the 77th BS load crew potentially saved a \$282 million aircraft and the lives of the aircrew.

FLIGHT LINE SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Airmen 1st Class Ricardo L. Flores and Jason R. Avey
552nd Aircraft Generation Squadron, 552nd Air Control Wing
Tinker AFB, Okla.*



While deployed to Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, Airmen Avey and Flores were preparing an E-3B AWACS aircraft for an afternoon launch. During the preflight, a ground air conditioning cart (ACE) was connected to the E-3 in order to cool down equipment prior to crew showtime. Unexpectedly, the ACE equipment lost power and stopped producing cooling air. When Amn. Avey opened the servicing door to the compressor unit, three-foot flames and black smoke emerged from the compressor compartment. Amn. Avey instinctively closed the door to the compartment to contain the fire and prevent it from damaging the aircraft and shut the



ACE cart down. Immediately after shutting down the cart, Amn. Avey disconnected the cart from the aircraft and began towing the cart away from the aircraft. Seeing this dire situation and the potential for the fire to spread to other equipment and aircraft, Amn. Flores responded to the fire with a 150-pound flight line fire extinguisher. Working together, Airmen Flores and Avey quickly brought the fire under control and extinguished it to prevent damage to other equipment. Airmen Flores' and Avey's quick, decisive actions and proper response contained an extremely dangerous fire, saving valuable resources and allowing the E-3 to fulfill 100 percent of its air traffic operations tasking in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

GROUND SAFETY AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Staff Sgt. Russell M. Ogg, and Senior Airmen Robert A. Hyle and Farra L. Stoddard
28th Munitions Squadron, 28th Bomb Wing
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.*



As flight line support members assigned to the munitions handling element of the 28th Munitions Squadron, the above individuals demonstrated exceptionally responsive and clear-headed action to prevent a major safety incident in an explosive storage environment. Amn. Stoddard was returning to her shop utilizing one of the section's Ford 10-ton L8000 tractors. Upon arriving at building 88240, Amn. Stoddard attempted to shut the vehicle's motor down, but was unsuccessful. Amn. Stoddard assessed the situation and heard a high pitch squeal coming from the engine compartment; she radioed the munitions handling dispatcher and requested assistance. Sgt. Ogg and Amn. Hyle immediately responded and attempted normal procedures for shutting down the motor, but were also unsuccessful. At this point they noticed a burning smell

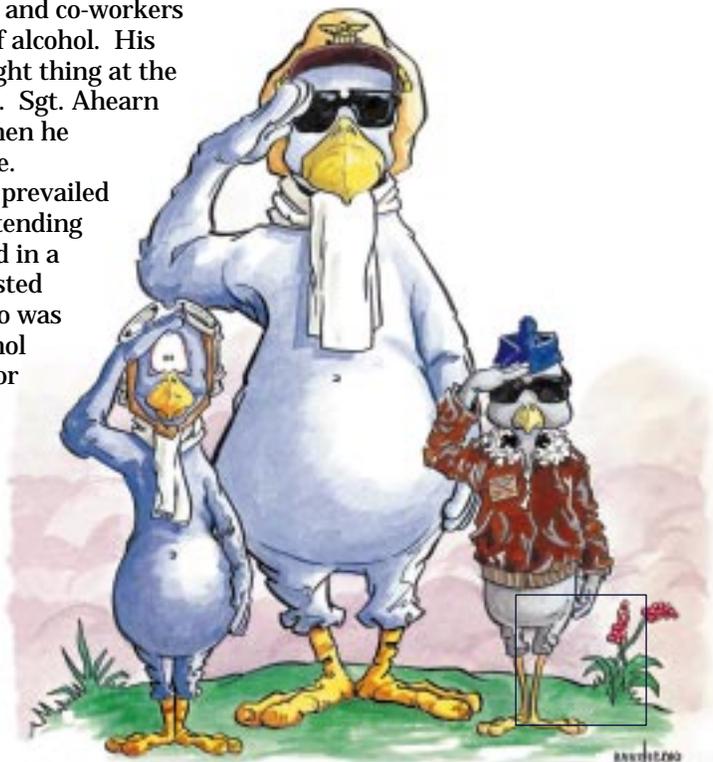
and proceeded to open the engine cowling, where thick black smoke and flames were coming from the fuel shut-off solenoid. Amn. Stoddard immediately removed the vehicle's exterior fire extinguisher and handed it to Sgt. Ogg, who quickly extinguished the fire. Without hesitation, Amn. Hyle disconnected the vehicle's batteries to terminate any electrical current to the solenoid. Their quick assessment of the situation and responsive actions were directly responsible in preventing the loss of an Air Force mission-critical vehicle, valued in excess of \$46,000, as well as averting potential injury to personnel and damage to munitions facilities.

TEAM SALUTES

The HQ ACC Team Salute recognizes a person, group of people, or unit for notable displays of quality performance in the area of mishap prevention. Recipients are selected by the ACC Safety Awards Board from the monthly nominees for ACC safety awards and are featured periodically in The Combat Edge Magazine. Our congratulations to these superior performers.

Staff Sgt. Robert A. Wylie of the 96th Bomb Squadron at Barksdale AFB, La., demonstrated exemplary inspection and maintenance practices while performing a B-1 park after-flight inspection on his assigned B-52H aircraft. During the inspection, something drew Sgt. Wylie's attention to the upper forward fuselage, an area that usually requires little attention. Looking closely, he discovered an eight-inch crack on the outer fuselage skin. The discrepancy was just aft of the in-flight refueling doors, which is a pressurized crew compartment area. Sgt. Wylie promptly notified the flight line expediter and structural fabrication specialists of his findings. While continuing to spearhead launch preparations for his aircraft, Sgt. Wylie took valuable time to aid structural fabrication troops in determining the airworthiness of the defect. Upon closer scrutiny of the structural crack, experts were quick to agree that, not only was this a miraculous find in the hours of darkness, but had the crack gone undetected, an in-flight loss of cabin pressurization and the subsequent explosion in the crew compartment most likely would have occurred. Sgt. Wylie's keen observation eliminated a potentially devastating loss of an aircrew and a \$67 million aircraft. His diligence, attention to detail and inquisitiveness are reflections of his workmanship and high regard for safety.

Staff Sgt. Patrick A. Ahearn of the 3rd Combat Communications Support Squadron, 3rd Combat Communications Group at Tinker AFB, Okla., is credited with saving the lives of three of his friends and co-workers from driving while they were under the influence of alcohol. His prudent judgment and commitment to doing the right thing at the right time proved that friends do make a difference. Sgt. Ahearn encountered stiff resistance from his co-workers when he refused to give two of them their keys to drive home. Through his own convictions and steadfastness, he prevailed as they spent the night at his home. While TDY attending an out-of-state conference, he was once again placed in a similar circumstance, but this time at the base enlisted club. He identified a member of a sister service who was in no condition to drive home after significant alcohol consumption. After a failed attempt at arranging for transportation with the club manager, his common sense and concern for another military member prevailed by doing the right thing in arranging a ride home for the individual. He personally took it upon himself to ensure the person made it home that night by arranging for the individual's personal safety. The squadron commander has recognized Sgt. Ahearn twice for his tenacity during these situations by awarding the coveted "HOOAH" tag for not standing by and doing nothing at all.





IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

*By Tech. Sgt. Charles Fish
283rd Combat Communications Squadron
Dobbins ARB, Ga.*

I was 24 years old when I got the phone call every parent, sibling or friend dreads.

One Saturday I went over to see my brother Don because he wanted to borrow my bowling ball. He was going out with Guy (our cousin) and two of their friends. When I arrived, he was in the shower and my other brother Dan greeted me in the kitchen. I told Dan I couldn't stay long because I was picking up my daughter for the night. I asked him to give Don my bowling ball, tell him to have fun, and that I would pick it up Sunday. I left and went to get my daughter.

Around 4 a.m. I was awakened by my telephone ringing. I answered my phone, still half asleep, and said hello. Dan was on

the phone and said, "Chris you need to come home. Don is gone." I asked him where Don went this time, because about three weeks prior to this my brother had gone out joy riding and gotten himself lost in the country. My brother replied, "He is not lost Chris." There was a long pause and I said, "What do you mean?" Dan replied, "Chris, Don is gone. He was killed in a car accident to-night." My heart sank and I said to myself that it could not be. I saw him Friday and he was there Saturday when I dropped off my bowling ball. I asked Dan if he was sure and he said, "Yes. Please come over; dad and I need you." I said I would be there in 30 minutes. I hurried to get my daughter and myself dressed and took her back to her

mom. I headed to my dad's house to be with them.

When I got there, reality really hit home. My youngest brother, who had only been 21 for only three months, was gone. I learned from my dad that Don was on his way home when he died. He was trying to tune his radio when he hit the 90-degree turn that was less than half a mile from our house. In his distraction, his car went off the road and struck a tree. The tuning knob came off in his hand and the force of the collision sent his head into the stem of the radio. The stem went right between his eyes and punctured his brain. He was killed instantly. I was told that he had been drinking and the police believed alcohol was a major factor, as well as the fact that he was not wearing a seat belt. The only consolation, if you can call it that, was that my brother was alone and he was the only person killed in the crash. The autopsy did show that my brother was legally drunk at the time of his death.

Later that Sunday morning Dan and I went to wake up Guy and tell him what happened. We left the house and drove over to his apartment. He greeted us at the door asking what we were doing there so early, and we told Guy that Don had been killed on the way home from his apartment. Guy said that he tried to get him to spend the night, but Don said he could handle it and wanted to make it home. My cousin regretted not making him stay the night at his apartment. We told him that it was not his fault, and that Don was stubborn and would have left once Guy had gone to bed anyway.

Soon after we laid my brother to rest, my dad broke down and said he never thought he would see the day when he would be burying one of his children. He always thought he would be laid to rest before us.

This was the first of several tragedies I would not wish on any family.

A bright spot came into my life when I married my current wife. My dad was there for our wedding. The morning before I was to get married my dad and I went out to breakfast. He greeted me at his hotel room

and we took a long walk to breakfast. My dad talked frankly with me about my other brother Dan, and said that, should something happen to him (my dad), I would need to make sure Dan did something with his life.

After we had our talk and before I headed to the church to get married, I called my brother in Michigan and asked him to keep an eye on dad when he got home because I was worried there was something wrong and he was not telling us. My brother said he would and that he would keep me informed. Well, I got married that evening and, while it was a joyous occasion, little did I know that in six months I would be headed home for my dad's funeral.

You see, three weeks before my father's passing, my brother called and told my wife (Deborah) my dad was dying, and asked her to be there when he called me after I got home. My wife told me it was the toughest moment in her life; she hated keeping it from me but knew that it had to come from my brother. When I got home, my brother called and told me dad was having problems walking and keeping his balance, and that he had taken him to the hospital that day. Dan asked me to come home and see dad because he had learned that our father had brain cancer and did not know how long it would be before the Lord came calling. I found out my dad had three tumors on his brain, and they were terminal. I went home and spent a week with my dad and then headed back to Georgia and my Air Force job. On the way home I asked the Lord to take my dad quickly and not to let him suffer. My prayers were answered. Less than two weeks later I was once again heading home to lay yet another family member to rest.

A year or so went by after my dad passed away and I soon found myself trying to keep track of my other brother. He had squandered his inheritance and was now a street person. My brother was at the lowest point in his life when I went back to Michigan to bring him back to Savannah and help him get his life on track. Three months later he was working at a local hospital and had a car

and apartment for himself. Later I got him working at Sam's Club, and he stayed there until three months before his passing. You see, my brother was transferred from Sam's club in Savannah back to Sam's Club in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1996, to be back where he would be closer to our mom. Little did I know that, in the year following his transfer back to Michigan, he would soon revert to being sad and hurting.

My brothers Don and Dan were both very close; they were a year apart and did everything together. I believe that when he returned home, he had problems dealing with both my brother and father being gone, even though it was 12 years ago. On a January evening in 1997, I got a call from my mom asking me to try and get a hold of Dan because he was not answering her calls. I said I'd see what I could do. I then called Dan's apartment and got his answering machine. I left a message and said I would call back later.

I did call back later — about four times within a few hours — and got no answer. I then called my cousin (Guy), who lived two

blocks down the street from him and asked him to go check on Dan. He said he would and that he would call me back. When he called me back, he said he saw Dan's truck and thought he heard movement in the apartment. I told him thanks and that I would try him again. Once again he did not answer my calls, so I got worried and called the Kalamazoo County sheriff's department and told them of my suspicions. They contacted Guy and Dan's landlord to have the apartment opened. Two hours later my cousin called me back and told me that Dan was indeed in his apartment, but he had committed suicide. No one knew why he had done it, and he left no clues explaining it, but I had my suspicions.

The week of arranging his funeral was something I will never forget. My mom and sister met me at the funeral home. We talked to the funeral director about Dan's funeral. I wanted to cremate his body and lay him to rest at the same gravesite as my brother, Don. My mom and sister were adamant that he would not want to be cremated, but I believed he would because he

- * Every 17.3 minutes someone commits suicide in the United States.
- * Suicide is the ninth leading cause of death for all Americans.
- * Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24.
- * More Americans die of suicide than homicide.
- * Approximately 30,000 Americans die of suicide each year.
- * Approximately 89 percent of the individuals who attempt or commit suicide DO give some indication of their impending action.

Suicide Danger Signals/Warning Signs

- * A change in habits (sleeping, eating, studying, activity level, sexual activity, job performance)
- * Giving away prized possessions
- * Increase in drug or alcohol abuse
- * Depression
- * Talking about committing suicide or threats to commit suicide
- * Previous attempts at suicide

- * Engaging in risk-taking and thrill-seeking behavior
- * Cutting off friendships
- * Unusual neglect of appearance
- * Expressing helplessness or an "I don't care" attitude
- * Feeling hopeless and life is less meaningful
- * Family disruption, such as moving, divorce, etc.
- * Major life changes, such as sudden death or loss of someone close, job loss, diagnosis of a health problem
- * Victim of violence

What to Do

- * Accept your own limitations.
- * You may want to help someone close to you and then find that the problem is too serious or too upsetting for you to handle.
- * It's not a failure on your part or something to be ashamed of.
- * You can't take the place of people trained to handle difficult issues.

could then be buried with Don. The funeral director said it could be done that way, so we went with that. The day before my brother's funeral I went to get his belongings from the police station, and they told me I would have to come back and get them Saturday. I said I would come back after my brother's funeral. We laid my brother to rest and I headed back to the police station with Guy to get Dan's belongs. What they handed me on top of his belongings was an answering machine tape that said, "The last wishes of Danny L. Fish." We hurried to Dan's apartment and found his answering machine. After listening to the tape I learned I had done everything he requested, from his cremation to his being buried in my other brother's grave. To me, this told me that Dan was beside me, guiding me to do what he wanted done.

I later learned that my dad kept a journal until he could no longer write, and once he passed away Dan took it over and started making notes in it. I learned that the day of my dad's death Dan had thought about committing suicide, but because I was headed home, he had to be strong. To this

day I feel that I kept Dan alive another 10 years after my dad's passing because, had it not been for me being alive and coming to my dad's funeral, he would have done it then.

If you've read this, then you understand how the death of one person affects the lives of many. My dad may have died from the same thing at the same time regardless, but I believe that both my dad and Dan began to give up when Don passed away.

So the next time you think about drinking and driving, think about this story and realize the impact your actions could have on others. I would not wish any part of this on anyone. I lost two brothers and a father in a short time. I remember reading about a 17-year-old girl being hit by a drunk driver as she walked to her bus stop and thinking, "I'm glad this hasn't happened to anyone in my family," as I'm sure all of you have done after reading news like that. But now you know that, even if you ever think this cannot happen to you, it can. It can happen to anyone. ■

- * You can, however, help your friend to open up and talk about what's bothering him/her.
- * DO express your concern, but DON'T be judgmental.
- * Don't act horrified or disgusted.
- * Let your friend talk out negative feelings or thoughts.
- * Don't feel you have to have the answers — just listen attentively.
- * Keep him/her talking.
- * If you suspect someone is suicidal, don't be afraid to ask direct questions, such as, "Have you been thinking about suicide? Have you made any plans? Have you talked to anyone else about this?"
- * Don't try to smooth over the problem ("It's not as bad as you think. Try not to think about it."). You will be tempted to emphasize the positive, but remember that a deeply depressed person has a very difficult time even recognizing anything positive.
- * Let your friend know that he/she is not alone, and that you are there to help.

- * Do something concrete. Talk about helpful people (guidance counselor, pastor, therapist, relative) or a hotline or emergency mental health center that he/she could talk to. If you think your friend can't or won't seek help, make the call for him/her. It's not a betrayal of trust to seek help that can save a life. And if you feel awkward or foolish about talking to a counselor or hotline, you can call without giving your name.

In Brief

- * Listen, believe, be direct, ask, hear, be non-judgmental
- * Talk, communicate concern, let the person know you care
- * If attempt/risk seems imminent, do not leave the person alone
- * Alert family members, friends, counselor, physician, etc.
- * Call or have the person call a counselor, hotline, etc.

Thousands of employees miss several days of work each year due to on-the-job injuries. In a recent study reported by the Cable News Network (CNN), four out of five employees in America will suffer from an on-the-job injury at some point. Most injuries occur in adults under the age of forty-five. These injuries not only have a physical effect on the employee, but also cause a considerable financial burden to both the employee and employer. Improving the work environment and practicing safe work procedures could easily prevent all injuries and eliminate the loss of employee and employer revenue.

Back injuries are mainly associated with poor body mechanics. These can occur if you move, carry, or lift heavy objects incorrectly. They can also occur by sitting or standing in an unnatural position or twisting your body abruptly or awkwardly. Such activities cause stress on back muscles, bones, discs, nerves, and ligaments, resulting in injuries. Simple steps, such as good posture, can be taken to avoid unnecessary stress on the back. Good posture strengthens the large muscles that support the spine, relieving stress on smaller, less efficient muscles. Exercise also strengthens and stretches the muscles that help support the spine.

Another concern with occupational injuries is slips and falls. Twenty percent of non-fatal injuries are accounted to slips and falls. The most frequent slips and falls occur on slippery walking and working surfaces. Employees should be aware of their working environment and should consider the importance of wearing the proper shoes. Synthetic rubber soles are recommended for wet surfaces, crepe soles for rough concrete or wood surfaces, and hard rubber soles for oily surfaces.

Back injuries, slips and falls are the main contributors to occupational injuries, but unsafe behaviors also play a major role in work-related injuries. Inappropriately carrying a heavy load for comfort can easily make someone lose his or her balance and fall. Simple activities such as going up and down the stairs can cause an accident if the person is not careful. Holding onto the railing helps avoid injury by maintaining the proper balance while going up or down stairs.

Holding a telephone receiver between your ear and shoulder can cause neck and upper back

strain. When talking on the phone, employees are advised to use a speakerphone, headset, or shoulder rest. If these items are not available, the recommendation is to free one hand to hold the telephone receiver. Modify your workstation to match your height so you can avoid any other related muscle strains. Avoid repetitive or sustained bending. Place objects often used within arm's reach, between knuckle and shoulder height. Avoid reaching across an extended space, and modify work habits that result in unnecessary motions. Ultimately, changing one's habits will be the best solution for avoiding some of these injuries.

Preventing accidents and injuries in the workplace involves teamwork. Employees need to cooperate with their employer in order to identify, report, and correct unsafe conditions and behaviors. Making a commitment to develop awareness of potential hazards is important. Employers should consider organizing a safety committee if one does not already exist. Employees should take the initiative and talk to their supervisors about organizing one. Establishing a strong employee safety and health program is a critical factor in reducing the extent and severity of work-related injuries, illnesses, and their related costs.

By staying focused, work-related injuries can also be prevented. This can be accomplished by taking short breaks, resting the body as well as the mind, avoiding the use of drugs and alcohol, and using the proper tools and safety equipment for the job being performed.

Planning for safety is a successful method of avoiding work-related injuries. It takes the cooperation of the employees as well as the employers to make sure the work environment and work practices are safe. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the organization in charge of making sure employers and their work places comply with the required safety procedures. Employers should also ensure that employees use safe work practices. With continued improvement of the work environment by the employer and practicing safe working procedures by the employee, these numbers can be reduced significantly. ■

*By Senior Airman Marlon J. Fuentes
USAF Thunderbirds Maintenance Analyst
Nellis AFB, Nev.*

Ground Safety Stats

ACC Losses for FY 00

(1 Oct 99 - 30 Sep 00)

Practice the principles of Risk Management both on and off duty.

Ground Mishap Fatalities

8 AF	
9 AF	
12 AF	
DRU	

Number of Ground Mishap/Dollar Losses

	Class A	Class B	Class C
8 AF	1 / \$185,700	0 / 0	144 / \$571,920
9 AF	4 / \$503,830	1 / \$250,000	156 / \$921,312
12 AF	8 / \$1,994,640	1 / \$115,000	213 / \$947,892
DRU	2 / \$250,000	1 / \$164,660	59 / \$292,081
FY 00 Totals	17 / \$3,434,170	3 / \$529,660	572 / \$2,733,205
FY 99 Totals (same period)	17 / \$4,261,492	1 / \$894,548	695 / \$3,867,061

Class A - Fatality; Permanent Total Disability; Property Damage \$1,000,000 or more
 Class B - Permanent Partial Disability; Property Damage between \$200,000 and \$1,000,000
 Class C - Lost Workday; Property Damage between \$10,000 and \$200,000

Toy Safety Tips for the Holidays

The Matching Game

- Toys should be matched to a child's abilities. The manufacturer recommendations serve as a useful guide.
- A toy that is too advanced or too simple for a child may be misused, which can lead to injury.
- Think BIG when choosing toys. All toy parts should be larger than the child's mouth to prevent injuries, including choking.
- Musical tops
- Nesting blocks
- Push and pull toys (remember — no long strings)
- Stacking toys
- Toy telephones

2- to 5-Year-Old Preschooler

Toys for this age group are usually experimental and should imitate the activity of parents and older children.

Purchasing Tips

- Before buying a toy, read the instructions. If the toy is appropriate for the child, read the instructions to the child for proper use of the toy.
- To avoid risk of serious eye or ear injury, avoid toys that shoot small objects into the air, or make loud or shrill noises. Parents can hold the noise-making toy next to their ear to determine whether it will be too loud for a child's ears.
- Look for sturdy toy construction. The eyes, nose and other small parts on soft toys and stuffed animals should be securely fastened on the toy. In addition, avoid toys with sharp edges.
- Books (short stories or action stories)
- Blackboard and chalk
- Building blocks
- Crayons, nontoxic finger paints, clay
- Hammer and bench
- Housekeeping toys
- Outdoor toys: sandbox (with a lid), slide, swing, playhouse
- Transportation toys (tricycles, cars, wagons)
- Tape or record player
- Simple puzzles with large pieces
- Dress-up clothes
- Tea party utensils

For the Older Crowd

- Never buy hobby kits, such as chemistry sets, for any child younger than 12 years old.
- Provide proper supervision for children 12 to 15 years of age.
- Tips of arrows or darts should be blunt, made of soft rubber or flexible plastic and securely fastened to the shaft.

5- to 9-Year-Old Child

Toys for this age group should help your child promote skill development and creativity.

Age-appropriate Toys

Newborn to 1-Year-Old Baby

Choose "eye-catching" toys that appeal to your baby's sight, hearing and touch.

- Large blocks of wood or plastic
- Pots and pans
- Rattles
- Soft, washable animals, dolls or balls
- Bright, movable objects that are out of the baby's reach
- Busy boards
- Floating bath toys
- Squeeze toys

1- to 2-Year-Old Toddler

Toys for this age group should be safe and be able to withstand a toddler's curious nature.

- Cloth or plastic books with large pictures
- Sturdy dolls
- Kiddy cars

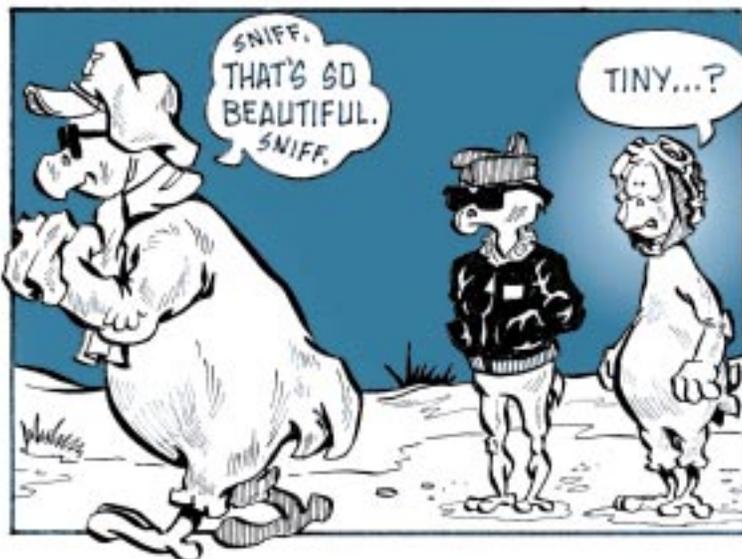
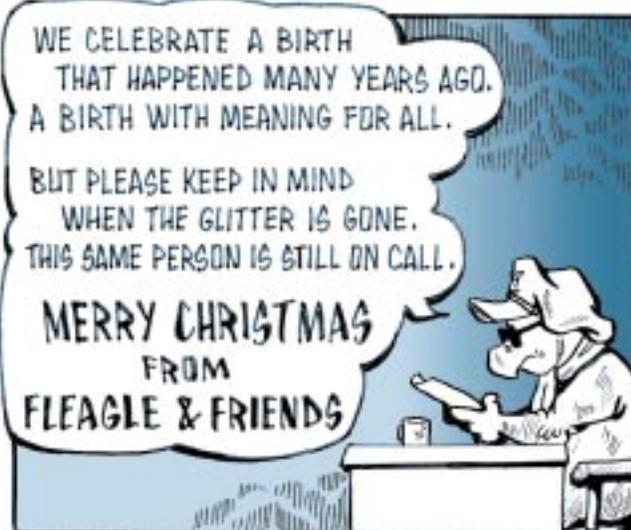
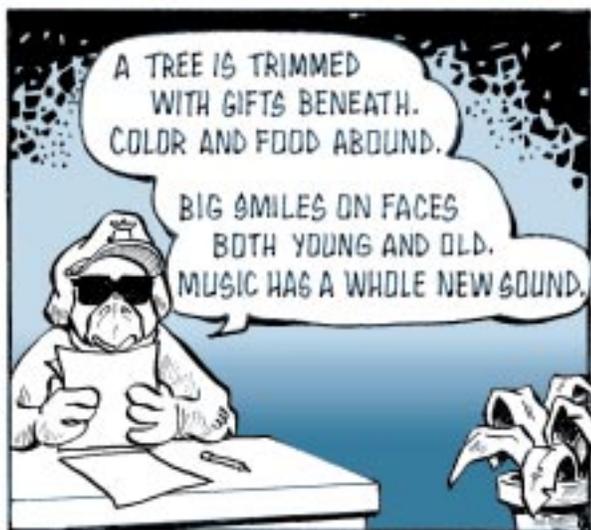
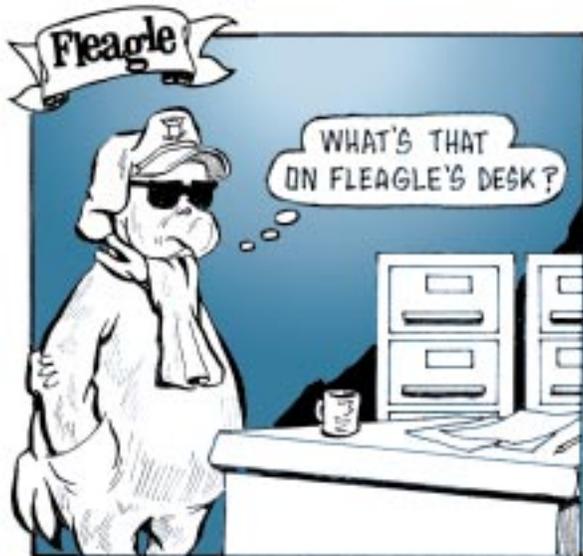
- Blunt scissors, sewing sets
- Card games
- Doctor and nurse kits
- Hand puppets, paper dolls
- Balls
- Bicycles
- Crafts
- Electric trains
- Jump ropes
- Sports equipment
- Table games

10- to 14-Year-Old Child

Hobbies and scientific activities are ideal for this age group.

- Computer games
- Sewing, knitting, needlework
- Microscopes/telescopes
- Table and board games
- Sports equipment
 - Hobby collections





Winter Survival

As a driver, there are many things you should know to always be prepared for the potential misfortune of being stranded in your vehicle during or after a snowstorm. Dress properly for the weather conditions when traveling, no matter how long or short the planned trip may be, and always keep a “winter survival kit” handy at all times.

The inventory is simple: a blanket, candles, a lighter, a jug of fresh water, a flashlight with working batteries, a shovel, a bag of sand, a brightly colored banner for marking your location in case you become snow-bound, and some nonperishable food. These few items can make the difference between life and death if you find yourself stranded in a winter storm. This list of items isn't meant to be all-inclusive, and where you live or plan to travel will likely dictate what additional items should be added to the list.

Of course, the objective is to have a winter survival kit but never need it. To help prevent ever needing the kit, you must keep your vehicle in good working order. Have it “winterized” prior to the winter driving season, and keep at least a quarter tank of fuel in your vehicle during the cold months. This can help prevent condensation and fuel line freeze-ups, as well as provide a source of heat in the event you become stranded.

If you find yourself lost or stranded during a snowstorm and have a cell phone, don't hesitate to use it. Call 911, a friend, relative, co-worker, or even the local radio station. Give your location, or last known location if you're unsure. Even a mile marker could be

helpful. Remember to tune your radio to a news station and keep it there; this will be your source of weather condition updates.

If snowbound, run the vehicle's engine for 20 minutes at one-hour intervals. Don't forget to keep the exhaust pipe clear and, if possible, keep the vehicle's passenger side windward (toward the wind) — this will help prevent exhaust fumes from entering the vehicle. Never wander away from your vehicle if stranded in a snowstorm. Remember, your car is your shelter and it's what a rescue team or member will be looking for.

The survival kit is your biggest asset



By Master Sgt. Tracy Turner
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Survival Kit



when stranded, so use the items wisely. Set up a schedule for eating what food you have and drinking your water. Your food is limited, so you'll have to be conservative and won't be able to eat until full, or even satisfied. Be sure to ration the water sparingly. Remember, you don't know how long it will be before help arrives. Although you can supplement your water intake by eating snow, it's best to refrain from this practice unless absolutely necessary.

Don't forget that the temperature generally drops at night, so use your candles for heat during the night. Candles generate a

lot of heat, especially in a small space such as a vehicle. As always, it's not recommended to fall asleep with a candle burning, so you should heat the vehicle, stay wrapped in your blanket, and blow the candle out before going to sleep.

This is a fight for survival, so you'll have to guard against frostbite as well. If your vehicle is equipped with an alarm clock, or if you have a watch with an alarm on it, set it to go off every hour around the clock. If you're a heavy sleeper, you may want to try sleeping during daylight hours when the temperature should be higher. This way there will be less chance of hypothermia setting in while you're asleep.

Don't forget to exercise and stretch; it's all right to get out of the vehicle to move around to keep your joints from stiffening up. This will also break the monotony of sitting, waiting and wondering. Never stay outside long enough to allow the inside of the vehicle to get colder than the atmosphere temperature.

Keep yourself occupied; if you have magazines or books in the car read them, if you have hand held electronic games play them. Avoid playing games on your cell phone since it has a limited battery life and you want to keep your communication link open.

You must remember not to panic and to never give up; the mental challenge can be as tough as the physical challenge. Be prepared for the unexpected, always apply personal risk management (PRM), and the winter survival kit will be just another one of those things you have in case you need it. Happy motoring! ■

