

## Aircrew Safety

Award of Distinction

Capt Kent Payne, 2Lt Michael Fessler, Lt Col John O'Connor, and 1Lt Shalin Turner distinguished themselves in their handling of a serious in-flight emergency while flying a B-1B aircraft on a local training sortie. During a low level training mission at approximately 600 ft Above Ground Level (AGL) at .9 mach, the crew of Hawk 82 saw a bird go by on the right side of the jet and felt the impact. The crew aborted the route, returned direct to base, and declared an in-flight emergency. Upon configuring the aircraft for landing, the crew noticed they had

fuel fumes in the cockpit. They immediately went on oxygen and continued their landing. After landing the control tower notified the crew of Hawk 82 that they were trailing a significant amount of smoke. The crew exited the runway and performed an emergency egress from the aircraft. Fuel was leaking from the right forward wing glove area. Crash recovery and a disaster control team responded and contained the fuel leak after the aircraft, lost approximately 10,000 lbs of fuel. The bird had struck the aircraft, dislodging a piece of aircraft sheet metal which penetrated the #1 main fuel tank. The exemplary adherence to emergency procedures by the crew of Hawk 82 resulted in the safe recovery of aircraft and crew.



**Lt Col John O'Connor, Capt Kent Payne, 2 Lt Michael Fessler,  
1 Lt Shalin Turner, 28th Bomb Sqdn., 7th Bomb Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas**

## Crew Chief Safety

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Sgt Dury displayed uncommon presence of mind during a local Phase II Operational Readiness Exercise SHARP-SHOOTER 03-07. While securing test equipment, he heard a loud crash and saw the aircraft rocking back and forth. He quickly went around the aircraft and saw a JP-8-drenched, smoking MJ-1 bomb lift less than 50 feet from his aircraft. There was also a 4-inch split in the 370-gallon wing tank and fuel was gushing out. After ascertaining there was no fire, he escorted the MJ-1 driver to nearest bunker, treated and assessed the driver for shock, and directed him to remove the JP-8-soaked chemical suit. If untreated, the jammer driver could have

suffered severe reactions from the JP-8 fuel. He then immediately proceeded back to the aircraft to secure the area and shut down two light carts eliminating a possible ignition source for the spilled jet fuel. SSgt Dury then directed six other individuals in the local area to cordon off the spill and establish a fuel stream barrier, halting the spread of approximately 300 gallons of JP-8 that already covered a 75-by-30 foot area. Base Safety, Quality Assurance, and senior base leadership evaluated accident reactions and found post mishap response to be flawless and timely — an overall impeccable operation. After containing the fuel spill, SSgt Dury coordinated the collection of 500 contaminated soak-up pads. Cool and level-headed under extreme pressure, he directed the emergency operation while maintaining strict adherence to Environmental Protection Agency, Air Force, and wing instructions. His incredible composure and immediate response prevented an environmental disaster and a potential fatality.

**SSgt David J. Dury, 336th Aircraft Maintenance Sqdn.,  
366th Fighter Wing, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho**

## Ground Safety

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Sgt Sullivan detected a fuel leak on an F-15E while conducting an end of runway (EOR) check on the Advanced Programs centerline pylon and Fiber Optic Towed Decoy pod. Noticing an excessive fuel leak dripping onto the pod, he notified EOR personnel who in turn called in a RED STREAK and returned the aircraft to its parking location. The flight line

production supervisor, weapons personnel, and fuel cell personnel, were called to the location and performed minor maintenance on the pylon. The aircraft taxied back to EOR for takeoff a second time where SSgt Sullivan reaccomplished the EOR check for the Fiber Optic Towed Decoy pod. At this time, SSgt Sullivan witnessed the pylon leak for the second time and determined that it was detrimental to aircrew and aircraft safety. He again notified EOR personnel. The mission aborted and the pylon was reinspected. It was discovered that there were several severed fuel hoses and cracked internal connections that could only be detected when the pylon was pressurized. Attention to detail and his belief that something was incorrect saved human lives and Air Force assets in excess of \$31.1M.

**SSgt Jerome M. Sullivan, 16th Electronic Warfare Sqdn.,  
53rd Wing, Eglin AFB, Florida**

## Flightline Safety

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SrA Grunert reported for a local training mission, which was scheduled to fly reconnaissance over the Southeastern United States. After his normal Computer Display Maintenance Technician preflight, SrA Grunert proceeded into the lower compartment of the aircraft for some advanced communications training. While in the lower compartment, he noticed a loose screw on the handle of a Generator Control Unit (GCU). A

GCU regulates high voltage, limits fault currents and power, and provides fault protection. Upon closer inspection of the area, he noticed two more loose screws on a second GCU and several loose screws on an access panel shielding high voltage equipment. SrA Grunert immediately informed his instructor and the flight engineer of the problem. The flight engineer determined the aircraft unsafe to fly unless the problem was corrected. Ground maintenance was contacted and was able to replace both GCU's and secure the access panel prior to the scheduled takeoff time. If these metal parts had fallen off the GCU, they would have made contact with high-power terminal connectors directly beneath. This would have triggered the terminals to short, causing arcing, sparks, smoke, and fumes. SrA Grunert utilized and applied proper crew resource management techniques to break the chain of events to prevent a possible mishap.

**SrA Eric M. Grunert, 963rd Airborne Air Control Sqdn.,  
552nd Air Control Wing, Tinker AFB, Oklahoma**