



No Incident is too Small

By TSgt Peter D. Moreau, McGuire AFB, N.J.

It started out as a cool fall day in England. It was a typical day for an ammo troop in the conventional maintenance shop, processing 20mm ammunition, chaff and flares, and of course, building up BDU-33 practice bombs. I was in the office area doing paper work while the assigned crew was out building up several hundred BDUs for the upcoming week's requirements. The next thing I remember is SSgt Snuffy bursting into the office area frantically yelling at everyone to evacuate. We all know as ammo or any other type of weapons troop that this is a gut wrenching feeling. Without asking questions we cleared the area as trained.

At the evacuation meeting point we found out the story. One of the troops assembling the BDU-33s dropped one on the floor. The practice bomb had its MK4 Mod 3 spotting charge installed, but no plunger or safing gear installed yet. The spotting charge severed in the middle and spilled its contents, causing the crew chief to immediately evacuate the building.

Emergency personnel arrived within minutes to take care of the situation. After half an hour or so, they removed the hazard, and cleared the scene, allowing us to go back to work. We were definitely angry that we were evacuated for such a small, seemingly insignificant incident. I remember everyone joking with the involved crew chief about his frantic reactions to the situation. Everyone thought he overreacted due to the nature of the explo-

sives he was working with. I also remember being part of the group making fun of him. As time went by, the incident became a memory, but the crew chief never really lived it down.

Several years later while enduring the hot summer months in Turkey, the BDU-33 incident came back into my life. I remember reading an article in the base newspaper about a specific weapons load crew. They were being recognized as the "Top" load team for their deployed unit. It was a pretty impressive article about some of the Air Force's top weapons

was a little earlier than planned. At least two of the loaders were evacuated to Germany for medical assistance. I'm not sure how the story ended, but I hope they all made it out with minimal, or should I say, non-permanent damage.

This incident compared to the earlier BDU-33 incident made me realize I had a bad attitude towards some of the small, repetitive operations we perform thousands of times without a single thought of the dangers we face. It was only a MK4 Mod 3 spotting charge on that cool fall day in England that

we laughed about. But several years later that same spotting charge sent two of the Air Force's top troops to the hospital with severe injuries. I can tell you now



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loaders. I bring this up because a week or so after this article there was a follow-on article about the same exact load crew. This article was not so glamorous. The article was about two weapons loaders who were seriously burned while loading BDU-33 practice bombs. While performing an operation that this crew had performed thousands of times before, a BDU fell to the ground and functioned as designed. Unfortunately for these weapons loaders on this day, it

that my eyes were opened up to a level they should have been opened to right from day one.

We preach safety as ammo or weapons troops on a daily basis, but do we really practice it 100 percent of the time? I can tell you that this ammo troop has done it ever since and will continue to live safety and teach safety until I no longer breathe AMMO (which will be the day I die)! There is no job small enough to disregard **SAFETY!**