

# Air Combat Command

## Aircrew Safety Award of Distinction

**CAPT BRIAN MEADE • CAPT KENT PAYNE • CAPT KEN BOILOT • 1LT JASON PAX**

During an Operation ENDURING FREEDOM sortie in Afghanistan, Rambo 34, a fully loaded B-1B, experienced an uneventful takeoff roll until past decision speed and immediately prior to rotate. At this point, the crew noticed a loud explosion, followed by a shudder and left yaw. The number four tire's outer tread had separated and had been ingested by three of the four aircraft engines. Engine number three was largely unaffected, however, engine number two suffered some damage, resulting in noticeable performance degradation. Engine number one was severely damaged and suffered a classic compressor stall at liftoff. Following rotation to liftoff attitude, the aircraft remained on the ground for an unusually long roll and finally lifted off with 1,000 feet of the 12,000-foot runway remaining. After being in ground effect for an extended period in order to gain energy, Capt Kent Payne began a shallow climbout while Capt Brian Meade retracted the gear and began retracting the flaps at one-quarter intervals. The tower controller reported a large flame trailing the aircraft, so Capt Meade checked cockpit indications and shut the number one engine down in accordance with bold face procedures. The crew dumped the majority of the aircraft's 190,000 pounds of fuel and Capt Ken Boilot further reduced aircraft gross weight by jettisoning all 24 of the 2,000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munitions. Finally, the supervisor of flying inspected the suspect gear as the aircraft executed a low approach. Twenty minutes after initial takeoff, the crew executed a safe landing and shut the aircraft down on the runway. After consulting with the wing commander, the crew stepped to the combat-loaded spare aircraft and completed their mission.



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**34<sup>th</sup> & 37<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadrons  
366th Wing  
Mt. Home AFB, Idaho**