



Letters to the Editor

From e-mail:

"Why did you use minefield clearance pictures for that reprint story on the Bagram Safety office? First, I thought it was going to be a story on land mine safety. It was just safety guys reading out of their continuity book. The pictures give the false impression that the safety office clears minefields."

—A-NON-E-MOUSE

Our Response:

My first response was to get defensive and I was about to push the launch button on an e-mail missile when I realized that someone not only had read the magazine, but had taken the time to respond, and provide feedback. I safely pinned the e-mail missile and responded with *"as for the photos, many times the photos we use were not shot to run with an actual story. It is our intent to try to best illustrate a story with the photos that are available to us. Therefore, a photo that we publish may have been taken at an entirely different location for an entirely different purpose..."*

As for the article, *The Combat Edge* is a "stringer" publication that is dependent upon article submissions from its readers, i.e., YOU, for material to print. It truly is the reader's magazine. If you think the Bagram story reads like "safety guys reading out of their continuity book," please take the time to write a better one, submit it, we'll help you clean it up and then publish it. **Readers:** you have the power to affect change, if you don't like the content of the magazine, give me something better to print, it's really that simple. My Point? "Don't curse the darkness, light a match."

We've made several layout changes to the magazine since April, and it will continue to evolve and change. Unfortunately, one thing that hasn't changed is the number of article submissions (too few) and feedback on the magazine (too little). Go figure, Airmen will swap e-mail messages about the latest Darwin Award winners, but they won't take time to submit information to the magazine. Few take the time to fill out formal surveys, so I DARE YOU to clog the magazine e-mail box (acc.sem@langley.af.mil) with stories, ideas, feedback, complaints or what you had for breakfast. I'm not picky; I just want confirmation that someone is seeing what is printed, and getting something out of it. I'm an optimist and I'll let you know if you've succeeded.



Mishap prevention is serious business, but readers can only take so many stats, gloom, and carnage before tuning out and we achieve nothing. We want to strike a balance between providing solid safety information, while striving to take ourselves a little less seriously. I believe we can be a little less formal while still getting the safety message across to the reader.

I believe pain is a good teacher, and first-hand experience is valuable, but I prefer to learn from other people's mistakes because it hurts less. We observe, or have "There I Was" and "Lessons Learned" experiences on- and off-duty nearly every single day. We re-tell those stories to our neighbors, friends, and coworkers, but there is an even larger audience

out there that can benefit from them. This is altruism at its finest; if you did something really stupid like disabling the safety features on your chain saw and lost a finger as a result, tell us and we'll tell everyone how stupid you were, and what you learned from it. It's far better Airman in ACC ones. Joking aside, if you would be embarrassed by telling your story, or think you'll get in trouble, we'll withhold an author's name and print a story listing the author as "A-NON-E-MOUSE (a-la *Combat Crew* the old SAC Safety Magazine)" as long as we here in ACC Safety have the original author's name and can verify the story.

Take control of the process, make the magazine better, and remember: you don't have to be a Pulitzer Prize winning author; you just need to tell a story with a good ground, flight, or weapons safety message and pass it on to us.

—Editor