

# Air Combat Command

## Aircrew Safety Award of Distinction

**Capt Linda Vadnais • Capt George Holland • Capt Bridget McNamara • Maj James Egbert**

After completing their operational mission, the B-1 crew began the 6-hour cruise back to the forward operating location. They rendezvoused with a KC-10 for post-strike air refueling. After establishing normal contact, the boom was unable to latch onto the air-refueling receptacle and fuel began streaming heavily over the windshield. Cockpit visibility was severely restricted by the leaking fuel. After both aircraft recycled their systems, the B-1 still could not latch onto the boom and the fuel leak became increasingly severe. Since the crew did not have enough fuel to return to the deployed location, they opted to divert to Masirah Air Base, Oman, expecting to land with minimum fuel. The offensive systems officer, Capt George Holland, quickly plotted the shortest course, reviewing airspace and landing base restrictions. The defensive systems officer, Capt Linda Vadnais, confirmed the pilot's fuel calculations and assisted in running the emergency divert checklists. Because fuel continued to leak from the receptacle and the winds were stronger than forecasted, the crew arrived with 4,000 pounds less fuel than planned. The low fuel state was compounded by a forward bay filled with over 16,000 pounds of bombs that required part of the fuel to be used for ballast to maintain proper center of gravity. While configuring the aircraft for landing, the crew discovered that they were unable to lower the flaps and slats. The instructor pilot, Maj James Egbert, continued to fly the aircraft and prepared for a high-speed, no-flap/no-slat landing while the aircraft commander, Capt Bridget McNamara, ran the emergency checklists. The low fuel state meant that the crew had one opportunity to make the landing. This was further complicated by the fact that Masirah's runway is the minimum length and width for normal B-1 operations. They landed within calculated touchdown parameters and immediately applied maximum brakes. The high touchdown speed necessary for a no-flap/no-slat landing and a runway surface that undulated for the last 5,000 feet made braking action and directional control extremely difficult. The crew's sound decision-making and quick reactions to a multiple emergency situation brought the aircraft to a safe stop within 100 feet of the end of the runway.



Sept. 2002



**34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron  
AND  
Det. 1 USAFWS,  
Mountain Home AFB, Idaho**

**28<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing  
Ellsworth AFB, S.D.**