

Air Education and Training Command's
TORCH
July/August 2007



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Air Force recruiter injured by driver speeding out of control

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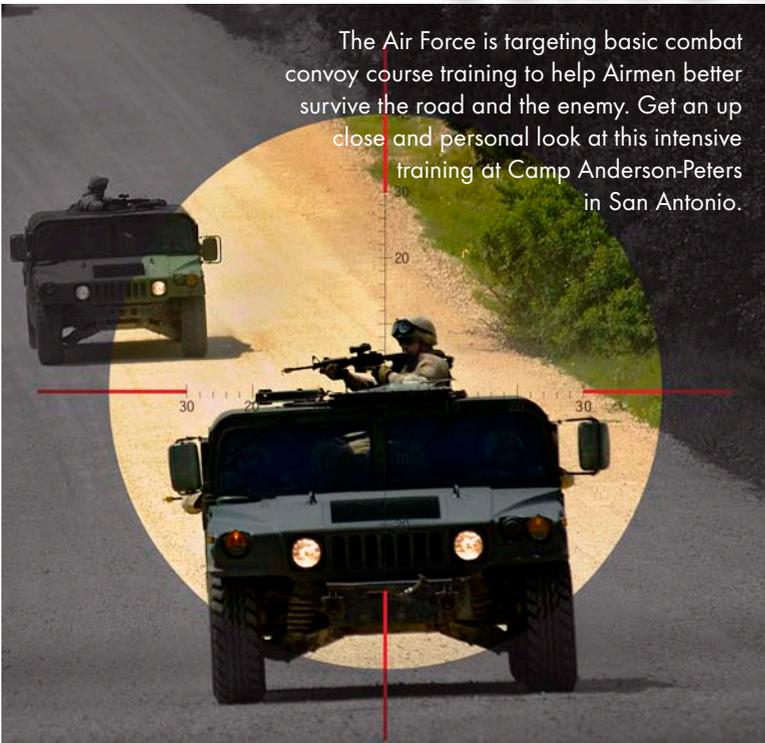
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An Air Force recruiter in Colorado Springs, Colo., is hit head-on by an out-of-control illegal street racer. He suffered injuries, but survived. An Airman in San Antonio wasn't so lucky when he encountered street racers.

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by Tech. Sgt. Matthew Hammen

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Flying gliders and sky diving are already two exciting activities. But when they are done at the same location at a combined 400 sorties and jumps per day, it makes for one of the busiest flight lines in the world. Welcome to the flight line at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

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Cover photo by Staff Sgt. Jacob Bailey
Back cover composite by Sammie W. King

July/August 2007
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Col. JOHN W. BLUMENTRITT
AETC Director of Safety

GERONIMO!

JUMPING INTO SUMMER

As kids growing up in West Texas, we used to holler “Geronimo” as we jumped off the barn into soft piles of hay 6 feet below. Back then we didn’t think much about the consequences, such as what if we missed our cushioned target or what if there was an unknown hazard (such as a pitchfork) buried just beneath the hay. We only had one thing on our minds: Have fun!

Thirty-something years later, I had the honor of performing my first parachute jump. Earlier this year in Colorado Springs, Colo., Maj. Alex Cos of the U.S. Air Force Academy’s Wings of Blue jump team escorted me, via a tandem jump, from 17,500 feet above sea level to the tiny drop zone on the academy’s airfield. While the jump was fun, my thoughts during the 35-second freefall were different from my childhood exploits in the barnyard. Instead of “Geronimo,” I kept telling myself, “Remember your training, do what they told you to do, and don’t get hurt!”

Ahhhhh, the difference a few decades can make.

As adults, we tend to occupy specific roles in life that match with customary behaviors, attitudes and skills. For example, conventional wisdom suggests that truck drivers drive trucks, bookkeepers keep books, and cadets parachute from planes. However, when people take on additional or unfamiliar roles, a mismatch among behaviors, attitudes and skills frequently ensues. Consequently, when truck drivers must also fire weapons, bookkeepers must wear chemical gear,



“I had the honor of performing my first parachute jump earlier this year in Colorado Springs, Colo.”

and senior officers parachute alongside cadets, the stage is set for intrapersonal conflict and qualitative role overload.

Studies suggest these conflict conditions link to increased mishaps, and thus, one could assume that Airmen accomplishing tasks outside their core competencies are demonstrating unsafe behavior.

But it doesn’t have to be that way.

The Air Force embraces a universal tool that lessens the negative effects of intrapersonal conflict and qualitative role

overload. Specifically, this tool is the embracement of a safety culture bolstered by risk management.

For example, many Airmen and their families are currently expanding their roles while enjoying the summer. As such, behaviors, attitudes and skills associated with vacations, such as scuba diving and operating a boat, are new and different. Yet, while the negatives associated with these risky roles may appear scary, it is refreshing to know that our Airmen and their families have been cultured to embrace safety in all they do.

Because of your commitment to that culture, I have no doubt you will remember your training and practice risk management in all you do. So, “Geronimo!” ... Let’s “jump” into our exciting summer activities with a safety mindset. That way we will all be on our way to having a safe and fun summer.

John W. Blumentritt

'BREEDING' CONTEMPT

In reference to the article "Doggy Boot Camp" (cover story in the May/June 2007 issue of Torch), please instruct your reporters to do their research. The dog breed is Belgian Malinois (pronounced mal-in-WAH),

not "malimars." I cannot believe the lack of professionalism this kind of error displays.

*Nan Bradford-Reid
University of Texas at Austin*



Thank you for the "Doggy Boot Camp" story you wrote in Torch on the military working dogs and their training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Working with these dogs every day is an incredibly rewarding experience, and seeing this story made my chest swell with pride for these troops.

I just wanted to leave you one little "editor's" note on the story: They're Belgian Malinois, not malimars. I'm not sure if you meant to include the nickname as is or just forgot to write in the actual breed name.

Thanks again for the heartening feature!

*Heather Rowan
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas*

You're right regarding the Belgian Malinois. According to an American Belgian Malinois Club representative, Belgian "malimar" is a nickname, as opposed to the American Kennel Club official breed.

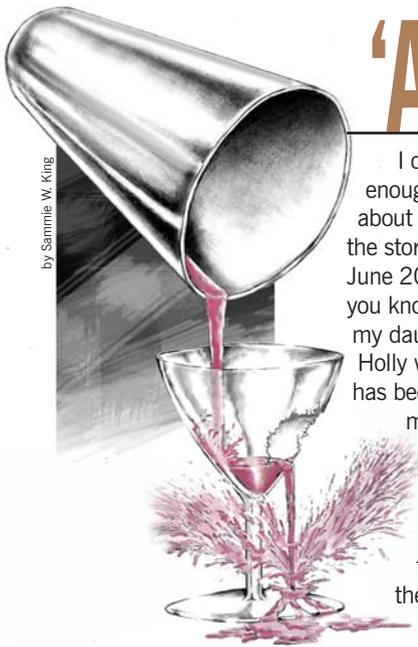
The stories and photographs on your "Doggy Boot Camp" cover story were fantastic. I've encountered some aggressive dogs in my time, so I even enjoyed your tips on avoiding dog bites. Your reference to dogs reacting like wolves if you "run like a scared rabbit" is spot on. I should know, I've been the rabbit a time

or two. On that note, I especially got a kick out of the accompanying article "Arthur Is King." Letting yourself get attacked by a trained guard dog? That's really going above and beyond to tell the story in my book.

*Mike Noland
Via e-mail*

LETTERS TO TORCH

Have a comment or complaint? Letters to Torch may be sent via e-mail to: torch.magazine@randolph.af.mil. Or mail to Torch Editor, HQ AETC/SEM, 244 F Street East, Suite 1, Randolph AFB TX, 78150-4328, or fax to DSN 487-6982 or commercially to (210) 652-6982. For customer service, call DSN 487-5818, or commercially at (210) 652-5818. Please include your name, address and phone number.



'A MOM'S MISERY'

I can't even begin to thank you enough for getting the message out about drinking and driving (reference the story "A Mom's Misery" in the May/June 2007 issue of Torch, page 16). As you know, Holly (McBride) was not only my daughter, but my best friend, as well. Holly would have been proud of all that has been done in her memory and in the memory of others (who have been killed by drunk drivers).

Holly's killer should have been released from prison June 4 (after spending nine years there). Just so you know, I did get the courage to write her killer a let-

ter about a week ago and told him about the story in Torch. I found out that while he was in prison he had a tattoo of a car, lady and little boy tattooed on his arm. I asked him if he would like to tell his side of the story in the hope of saving lives, but have not heard from him yet.

I hope to hear from him, but if not, I wish him the best in picking up the pieces of his life and hope that what happened to him will change someone else's life.

Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to and share Holly's story.

*Jeannine Roberts
Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas*

What a tragic, but touching story in your May/June 2007 issue ("A Mom's Misery"). It must have been hard for Jeannine Roberts to relive this nightmare. But her tale is heroic because she goes through the pain of

retelling the story of losing her only daughter simply to help prevent others from meeting the same senseless end. Bravo to Ms. Roberts!

Sam Kent, Via e-mail

A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

In reference to the article "Zero in on Safety" by Air Education and Training Command Commander Gen. William R. Looney III: General Looney's emphasis on "being safe" during the 101 Critical Days of Summer with AETC's "Operation Summer Survivor – Zero in on Safety" campaign will go a long way.

When senior leadership cares, everybody else ends up caring too.

Col. Daniel H. Stanton
Pentagon



by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

General Looney

A FATHER'S WISH



I am the father of the Chloe Bella Lombardo (reference the article "Tears for Chloe" in the March/April 2007 issue of Torch, page 8, which chronicles Chloe's death from an accidental poisoning). I can't begin to tell you all how wonderful the article you did on our daughter was.

My wife Billie and I are so grateful that you gave us a chance to tell our story and educate Airmen across the globe about the dangers of

household poisons and prescription medication. I have already received numerous e-mail messages from across the Air Force from parents who have locked up their medications. By getting one e-mail, we have done our job. Thank you from the Lombardo family — Kevin, Billie, Lexie, Lidia and KJ.

Capt. Kevin B. Lombardo
Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.

I am the chief of safety for the 692nd Intelligence Group, and I just read the story about Chloe's accidental poisoning in the March/April 2007 edition of Torch (cover story). I would like to include some photos and part of the story into my safety day presentation. As the article is posted to the Air Education and Training Command Web page, will it allow me to extract one or two of the pictures?

Master Sgt. Kim E. Lingham
Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii

Yes, when a Torch article is posted on the Web, most include high-resolution copies of accompanying photos, which become public domain. Chloe's story included some as well.



POSTERS FOR POLICE

I am a police deputy chief in Ohio. My son is a captain at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. As part of my duties I oversee our division training. Police training has many parallels with Air Force training. Your poster series would make a grand edition to our training atmosphere. Also, whenever we visit our son, I always read your publication from cover to cover.

Deputy Chief Walter Distelzweig
Columbus, Ohio

ALCOHOL DEATHS

Concerning the 2007 Torch Calendar on the July page under "That Figures" where it states that "200,000 deaths nationwide are related to alcohol use each year": Does this number reflect accident-related deaths, or does it also include deaths due to illnesses related to alcohol?

Daniel L. Olberding

Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.

The number reflects all alcohol-related deaths, including mishaps, illnesses, suicides and murders.



AN EPIPHANY ON CARS VS. MOTORCYCLES

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — I'm a parent so I have a lot of safety concerns. I think about things differently than when I was a teenager, probably because I own a couple of high maintenance teenagers myself. Young adults certainly know what they want, but sometimes they don't know what they want ... if you get my meaning.

My daughter recently turned 16. Being the high minded scholar that she is, she developed a point paper showing all the reasons she needed her own car. She meticulously listed her logic on a full color spreadsheet that was so convincing that four of her friends used it to induce their parents to buy them cars. I didn't want to appear like a slacker in front of all the other dads so I told her I would help her get a car.

Since she obviously spent a considerable amount of time reasoning out why she needed a car, I was sure she had some very specific qualities and expectations of the vehicle itself. She did, but once I told her BMW and Mercedes were out of the question, her logic kind of lost its edge. I asked her what else she wanted in a car.

She told me, "It has to be gray. I need enough room for two friends. I don't want to move the shift thingy too much while I'm driving. And I want a cushy steering wheel."

I made a note of her points and decided to confine her to the house for the next five years. Here's a young lady who wants to navigate the mean streets of San Antonio and her biggest priority is color. I planned to shadow her every step in the car buying business.

We went to a local dealer and started browsing. Once we found the right color and correct amount of doors, I started looking for features I wanted for my daughter. I was relieved to find all the newer vehicles had seat belts and airbags as well as crumple zones for impact. I told my daughter I felt better knowing the active and passive restraints were in place on all these cars.

"The active passing what?" she said, just as a young salesman approached.

"He'll tell you about the active and passive restraint systems," I said, nodding at the salesman as he took my outstretched hand and shook it.

"The active passing what?" he said. "I'll ask the manager about that."

So I quickly schooled these two youngsters on the importance of seat belts and air bags. They both looked at me as if I were daft.

My daughter said, "Duh, those things are always there. It's like wheels; all cars have them."

She rolled her eyes.

"You'll have to excuse my dad," she gushed to the salesman. "He rides a motorcycle."

At that moment I had an epiphany. My motorcyclist's mind leapt the chasm, and I understood, actually *understood* something that has always puzzled me about motorcycle safety. For those of you thinking faster than I can type you're probably already saying to yourself, "Well of course, there are no built in safety systems on motorcycles. That's why we have protective gear."

Well, you're right to a point.

The enlightenment I received went deeper to the heart of the matter. It's not that cars have built in safety features; it's that people never have to give them a thought. They are automatically protected to some degree whenever they jump in that car. Even if they neglect to fasten their seat belt, the vehicle still provides some protection in other areas that a motorcycle does not.

This "no worries" mindset goes further. Most motorcyclists ride part time. We still spend more time in that safe cage than on the back of a "risk rocket." Our rationalization carries over from the car,

and we make decisions from a car driver's perspective. We figure we don't need riding pants, because blue jeans are good enough. Long sleeves are required to get on base, so a cotton shirt will do. My brain is in the top half of my head, so a half helmet will suffice.

Most riders tend to view traffic safety from where we spend most of our time and that's in a car. We don't fear the road as much as we should.

I remember as a kid going to the library and looking at the picture books that chronicled the history of the automobile. I was fascinated with the Stutz Bearcat, the Stanley Steamer and all of those great old autos from 100 years ago. The blurry photos showed the proud drivers of these new vehicles

decked out in heavy coats, leather gauntlets and driving goggles. When men first started driving cars, they had to wear protective gear to avoid injury, and these cars were *slow*. Now modern cars have all the safety built in, and we don't hesitate to get in and drive wearing shorts and sandals.

Not so with a motorcycle. We all know proper riding gear is essential. I'd like to point out that helmets, eye protection, boots, pants and jackets are keeping up with the automobile as far as crash worthiness; gear gets stronger and lighter every year.

So give a lot of thought to your protective gear whenever you ride. Give a lot of thought to the road. Give a lot of thought to riding safely in traffic.

— Bill James
37th Training Wing Ground Safety



Motorcycle accidents are on the rise throughout the Department of Defense and officials want to stress safety as the summer months approach. The Air Force holds courses for all Airmen who ride motorcycles to promote safety and encourage safe riding habits.

RETIREE SURVIVES BOATING ACCIDENT

BALTIMORE — Tim Olson was engaged in a game of cat and mouse. Only, he didn't know it. As he drove his wave runner atop the icy waters of Lake Powell in Utah, an inexperienced teen had driven up on his tail and was closing fast. Unbeknownst to Olson, the teen had illegally cut across the lake and planned to catch and then pass him.

Then Olson began his turn in the normal traffic pattern just as the boy gunned his machine to pass.

The teen T-boned him.

Olson, a retired Air Force master sergeant from Baltimore, didn't see his life flash before his eyes. He didn't see any white lights. There was simply darkness.

As a matter of fact, he doesn't even remember the accident. The details had to be filled in by witnesses.

"My friend who pulled me out of the water said I had lost consciousness," Olson said. "While he was checking my vitals, he said I woke up momentarily, but passed out again."

Olson had sustained a severe concussion and bruising to his left leg, which remained sore for weeks after the accident. But, luckily, he survived. Miraculously, the teen escaped the collision without a scratch, even though he too had been violently thrown from his wave runner. Not only was the teen inexperienced (it was his first time on a wave runner) and driving recklessly, he'd also been drinking alcohol.

"That's not a good combination on the water," said Olson, who spent the night in the hospital, but was released the next day.

"Both of us could have been seriously injured or killed."

It may not be a good combination, but unfortunately, it's not that uncommon. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, nearly 70 percent of all boating fatalities occurred on boats where the boat operator had not attended a boating safety education course. Reports also suggest that alcohol is a contributor in more than one-fourth of all boating fatalities.

— Tim Barela



When an inexperienced boater rammed into his wave runner at Lake Powell, Utah, Retired Master Sgt. Tim Olson of Baltimore was knocked unconscious. Olson survived the crash, but many boaters won't be so lucky this summer.

BOATING TIPS

The following safe boating tips from the U.S. Coast Guard can help boating operators avoid accidents during this 101 Critical Days of Summer, which runs through Labor Day:

■ **Wear your life jacket while boating**

Life jacket use by all boat occupants can reduce drownings. When properly fitted, a life jacket can help prevent a tragedy. It is estimated that 426 lives could have been saved in 2005 if all boaters had worn life jackets.

■ **Avoid alcoholic beverages while boating**

Alcohol use affects judgment, vision, balance and coordination. Add in the heat from the sun, and you have a deadly combination. Reports suggest that alcohol is a contributing factor in about one-quarter of all boating fatalities.

■ **Complete a boating education course**

More than 40 percent of reported incidents in 2005 involved operator-controllable factors. The primary causes of incidents are carelessness or reck-

lessness, operator inattention, operator inexperience, and unsafe speeds. Boating education courses teach the regulatory and statutory rules ("Rules of the Road") for the safe operation and navigation of recreational boats. Nearly 70 percent of all boating fatalities occurred on boats where the boat operator had not attended a boating safety education course. Most base services units offer boating education courses. Check with your local services unit for details.

AIRMEN JAILED IN FROG-TOSSING CASE

SEOUL — The last of three Airmen involved in an infamous frog-tossing incident at Kunsan Air Base, Korea, was found guilty in a court-martial March 16.

Staff Sgt. Herman N. Elizee, of the 35th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, was sentenced by military Judge Col. Steven Hatfield to four months in jail, a bad conduct discharge and reduction in rank to E-1.

Elizee will serve only two months in jail according to a pretrial agreement.

On June 26, 2006, Elizee tossed a small frog into an F-16 jet engine vortex, where he knew it would be sucked into the turbine blades, said prosecutor Maj. Jennifer Kramme.

Earlier, Senior Airman Welland Wilkerson tossed the frog but missed, according to court testimony.

The group used team leader Staff Sgt. Aaron F. Wilson's camera to film the incident. The video later appeared on Wilson's My-Space.com Web page and clearly showed the jet's Kunsan Air Base tail markings.

Although the frog didn't damage the engine, regulations strictly forbid any foreign objects near the engine. Maintainers learn that on their first day of training, officials said.

"It's not up to them to pick and choose what is and isn't safe, and when to comply," Kramme said.

While the engines are built to withstand larger objects than the frog, there is always the possibility that a small object could damage one of the smaller, internal blades, witnesses said at Wilson's trial.

When the video was discovered, Kunsan officials grounded its 41-jet fleet to check all engines for damage and restore confidence in their maintainers, officials said.

On March 2, Wilson was sentenced to three months in prison, a bad conduct discharge and reduced in rank to E-1 as part of a plea agreement.

Earlier this year, Wilkerson was sentenced to 30 days in jail and reduction in rank to E-1 for throwing the frog at the engine, although he missed. Wilkerson's sentence was commuted to reduction in rank to E-2 by the wing commander, legal officials said.

— Erik Slavin

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SUMMER DROWNING

HIGH RISK TO CHILDREN

MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. (ACCNS) — The young boy peered up at me through the clear waters of Florida's Ichetucknee Spring on the day before my 31st birthday. He looked calm, peaceful and somewhat serene. I asked a nearby adult if the child was OK, and he told me yes, that the boy had been playing in the chilly waters of this natural swimming hole earlier.

But when air bubbles rose to the surface and the child seemed to float over on his side, I knew something was seriously wrong.

We pulled the boy from the water. His hands and teeth were clutched, his eyes wide open, and foam leaked from his nose and mouth as I laid him on his back to assess the situation. He wasn't breathing.

I pinched his nose and administered a breath of air. With no results, I attempted a second time. My brother, also a military member trained in self aid and buddy care, stood calmly behind me, reminding me to stay focused and to tilt the child's head back. With the third breath, his chest rose as his lungs inflated with air. I could hear the water bubbling and gurgling in his chest — and then, a cough.

A few seconds later, a staff member at the park shouted to turn the child onto his left side. She then took over the situation as I stepped back to the water's edge in disbelief at the surreal events that just unfolded. She gave him more rescue breaths, and hit him in the back to force the cold water from his chest.

The boy's family gathered a few feet away from him. They were crying, shouting, praying. I too said a silent prayer for God to help this child. He did. The boy was treated for shock while we waited for the paramedics to arrive. I remember thinking his scared, terrified screams after he regained consciousness were like a newborn baby fighting for life in a strange new world.

A collective sigh of relief and a round of applause from the crowd of onlookers filled the area as the boy was taken to the ambulance.



by Tim Barela

When an Airman pulled a young boy from the water and discovered he wasn't breathing, he had to use CPR to save him.

WATER FATALITY FACTS

◆ *Unintentional fatal drowning in the United States averages nine people per day, or around 3,000 per year.*

◆ *In 2003, 782 children ages 0 to 14 years died from drowning.*

◆ *Although drowning rates have slowly declined the last few years, drowning remains the second-leading cause of injury-related deaths for children under 14.*

— Center for Disease Control

He was flown via helicopter to Gainesville, Fla., and later released. Afterward, I hugged my own children as the event replayed over and over in my mind.

My message for parents is this: Teach your child to swim. Ensure he or she has a healthy respect for water and knows the dangers. It's never too early to start teaching your children these valuable lessons.

It is also important to learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation because you never know when you'll need it. My first introduction to CPR was through the Boy Scouts while in grade school, and it has been way too long since my last formal class. I intend to sign up for a refresher course soon and will insist my children take the class once they come of age.

If you're assigned to a career field which requires a CPR class annually, take it seriously. If you're not, seek out the training on your own. You'll be glad you did.

This year, my best birthday gift was the realization that life is precious and can be cut short at any moment. Complete strangers knowing the proper steps taught in a CPR class probably saved that little boy's life. Next time it could be my own child ... or yours.

— Tech. Sgt. Sonny Cohrs
347th Rescue Wing Public Affairs

PROTECT YOUR EYES FROM UV-RELATED DAMAGE

- Protect your eyes whenever you're outside for a prolonged period — even when it's gray and overcast.
- Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays.

- Wear goggles or sunglasses that wrap around your temples for better protection if you spend time in the water.
- Protect your eyes when UV light is most intense, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Wear a brimmed hat.
- Don't forget the kids! Protect their eyes with hats and sunglasses too.

— Courtesy of the
TRICARE Management Activity



Illegal Street Racing

Air Force recruiter injured
by driver speeding
out of control

By **TIM BARELA**

Photo by Staff Sgt. **JACOB BAILEY**



D driving in a southbound lane on Academy Boulevard in Colorado Springs, Colo., Master Sgt. Prince E. Porter Jr. saw the white 1980 Camaro racing another vehicle in the northbound lane.

Crash photos courtesy of Master Sgt. Prince E. Porter Jr.



It's not hard to see why witnesses thought Master Sgt. Prince E. Porter Jr. was a goner when a street-racing Camaro (top) hit his government vehicle head-on.

He watched helplessly as the speeding Camaro hit the median at more than 75 mph (the speed limit was 50), and the driver lost control. The Camaro went airborne directly in his path.

"There was no time to react; I didn't even have time to curse," said Porter, the operations flight chief for the 367th Recruiting Squadron in Colorado Springs. "I couldn't believe what was happening."

None of it made much sense. It was 9:30 in the morning on a clear, bright, sunny day March 22. Porter was just starting a five-hour trip to Albuquerque, N.M., where he was going to give training to some fellow recruiters. Most people were already at work by that time, so the roads weren't as congested as they were just an hour earlier.

But then, illegal street racing never does make much sense — no matter what time of day or night it happens. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, nationwide statistics show that nearly 50 people are injured for every 1,000 who participate in illegal street racing.

When the Camaro dove head-on into the front of the government vehicle (a 2007 Dodge Stratus) the recruiter drove, the first police to arrive at the scene said they figured there was no way the sergeant could have survived. The driver's

compartment was mangled, and Porter had to be cut out by the Jaws of Life.

Porter was conscious but disoriented as rescuers worked frantically to free him. He was also in a lot of pain.

"I was aware of what was going on," the 45-year-old said. "Even though I was trapped in the vehicle and in pain, I didn't panic. I didn't think I was going to die. I focused on what the rescue workers were doing. They kept talking to me — probably to keep me from losing consciousness and going into shock — so that kept me focused. The only thing that I was apprehensive about was facing a needle. I have this thing against needles, and I knew one was coming (for the IV). Other than that, I was pretty calm."

When rescue workers finally freed Porter, they put him in the ambulance

and rushed him to nearby Memorial Hospital. Sure enough, he did face the dreaded needle in the ambulance. But with the needle came morphine, so his apprehension soon disappeared.

At the hospital he went through a battery of tests that included X-rays and CAT scans. His wife Martina, who works in the life skills center at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., didn't get to see him for nearly two hours after arriving at the hospital.

Miraculously, he survived the crash in relatively good condition, though not totally unscathed. He suffered a torn muscle in his right shoulder, for which he still has to go through physical therapy. He also tore a ligament in his right thumb, and sustained painful bruises to his ribs and his left hip.

In February 2004 Senior Airman Christopher Pedroley of the 311th Human Systems Wing at Brooks City-Base in San Antonio wasn't so lucky. A street racer rear-ended a car in which Pedroley and his wife (Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Pedroley) were passengers in the back seat. The collision caused their car to spin out of control. Elizabeth survived the crash; her 21-year-old husband did not.

Porter knows all too well that he could have met Pedroley's fate. He's thankful he wore his seat belt, thankful for the airbag that deployed and thankful for some good luck.

"It really hit me a few weeks later when we were picking up my son (visiting from college) at the airport," Porter said. "The hair kind of raised on the back of my neck when I realized that just an inch or two this way or that, and I might have never seen him again."

Porter said he doesn't have any lingering emotional effects from the crash. Having driven thousands and thousands of miles as a recruiter has



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Matthew Hansen

Back in the saddle and still bearing some bandages from the crash, Porter says he's always been a cautious driver, but that he's even more so now.

steeled his nerves behind the wheel of a car. He even won an annual safety award two years ago as a recruiter in New Jersey for having driven the most miles with no accidents (although, he jokes that he's definitely out of the running for the honor this year).

"I've always been a cautious driver," he said. "I still am. Most importantly, I always strap on my seat belt — that's my security blanket. If I hadn't worn my seat belt that day ... it would have been curtains."

Unfortunately, sometimes Airmen are not just the victims of street racing, they are the perpetrators. Earlier this year, a first lieutenant in San Antonio was arrested and jailed for illegal street racing. His fate still awaits him.

"Street racing is so stupid," the recruiter said. "The guy who hit me is the luckiest of all. He was up and walking around right after the crash. Plus, if I'd died, he'd be facing vehicular manslaughter right now. And he's in enough trouble as it is."

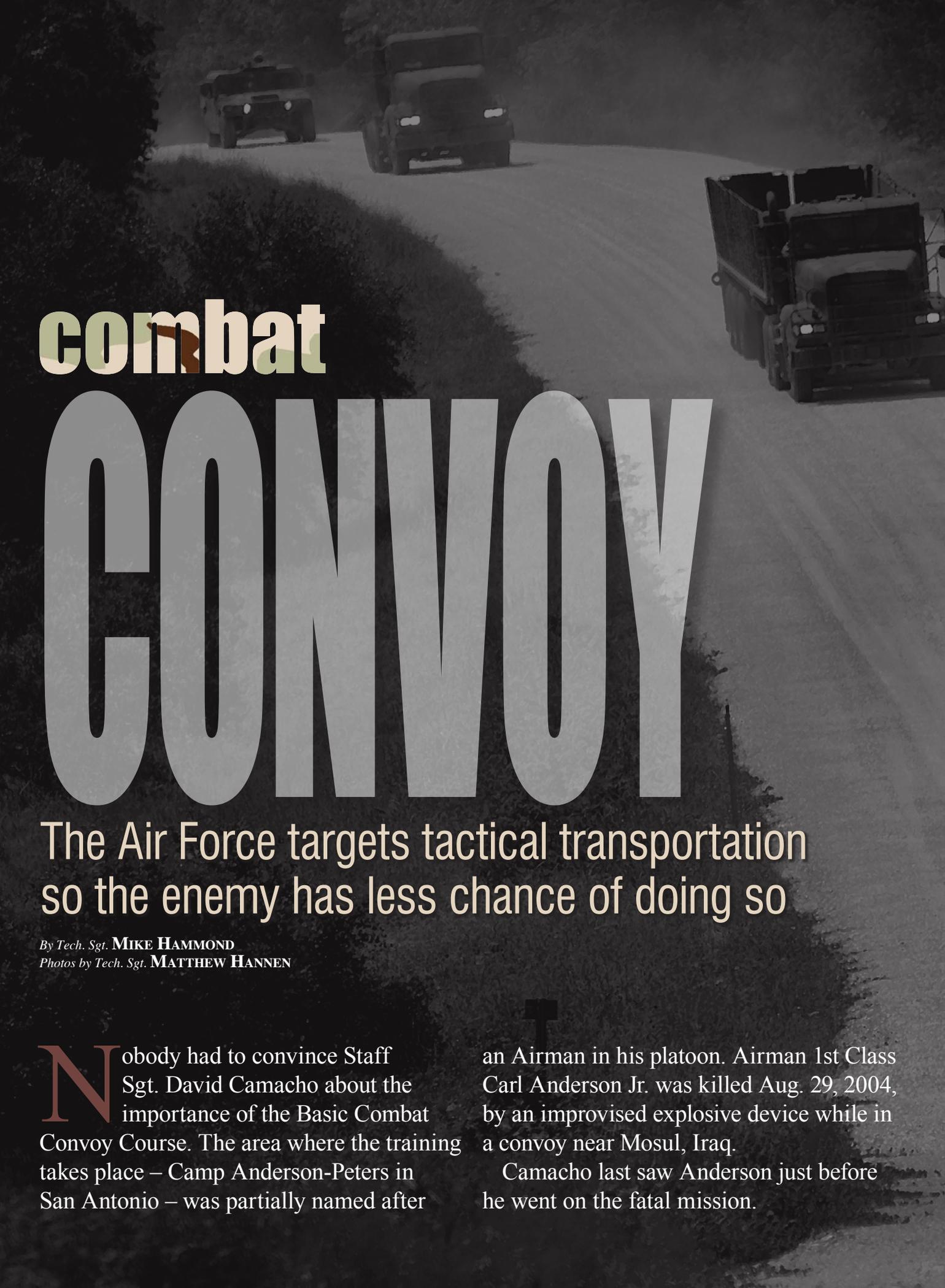
The first police to arrive at the scene said they figured there was no way the sergeant could have survived. The driver's compartment was mangled, and [the Air Force recruiter] had to be cut out by the Jaws of Life.



Months after the head-on collision, Porter, here with physical therapist Ashlee Nelson, still goes through physical therapy to work on his injured shoulder and wrist.

Penalties Faced by Illegal **Street Racers**

- ☑ They can be arrested and have their cars impounded.
- ☑ If convicted of street racing or aiding and abetting a street race, they can be imprisoned for up to six months (or much longer if they cause injuries or death) and heavily fined.
- ☑ Their driver's license can be revoked.
- ☑ Their car insurance may be cancelled or the rates dramatically increased.
- ☑ Spectators and vehicles in and around illegal street races are often penalized as well.



combat

CONVOY

The Air Force targets tactical transportation so the enemy has less chance of doing so

By Tech. Sgt. **MIKE HAMMOND**
Photos by Tech. Sgt. **MATTHEW HANNEN**

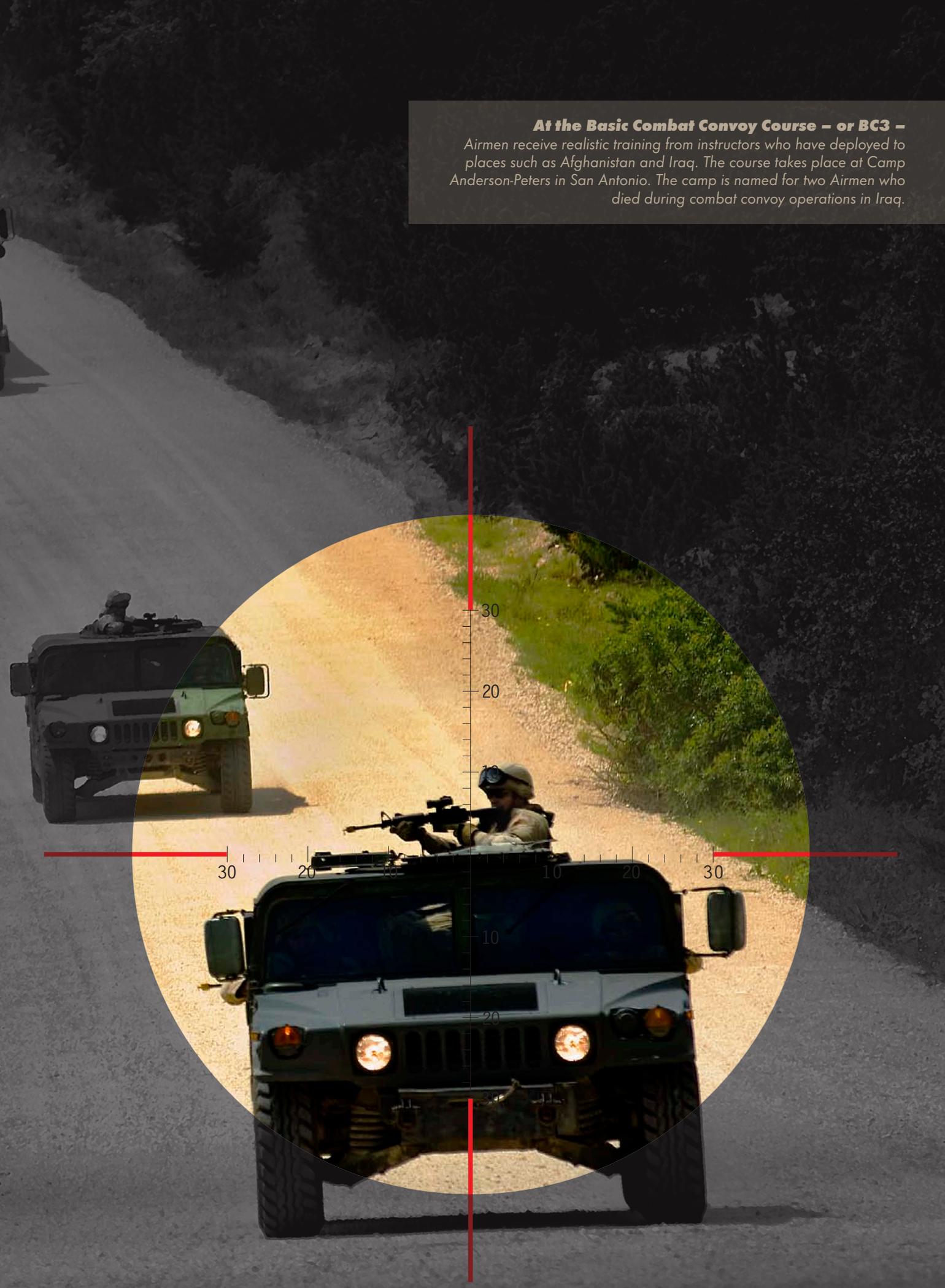
Nobody had to convince Staff Sgt. David Camacho about the importance of the Basic Combat Convoy Course. The area where the training takes place – Camp Anderson-Peters in San Antonio – was partially named after

an Airman in his platoon. Airman 1st Class Carl Anderson Jr. was killed Aug. 29, 2004, by an improvised explosive device while in a convoy near Mosul, Iraq.

Camacho last saw Anderson just before he went on the fatal mission.

At the Basic Combat Convoy Course – or BC3 –

Airmen receive realistic training from instructors who have deployed to places such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The course takes place at Camp Anderson-Peters in San Antonio. The camp is named for two Airmen who died during combat convoy operations in Iraq.





Cadre instructors brief troops on what to expect when a combat convoy gets under way.

“To be able to shake hands and give Anderson a hug before we went out on our separate convoys, and then he didn’t come back ... that was a hard core reality check,” Camacho said quietly as he searched for the words to convey his loss. “But it told me that everything we were supposed to be learning means something. When somebody says, ‘This is the difference between life and death,’ that’s what it actually means – life or death.”

Camacho described Anderson as a friend and “a pretty popular guy.” Camp Anderson-Peters is named for Anderson and Staff Sgt. Dustin Peters – who died July 11, 2004, while on convoy duty in the same general area in Iraq. So it was bitter-sweet for Camacho, a truck commander, when he returned to the area named for his comrade and friend for training this summer just before another deployment – this time to war-torn Afghanistan.

Where the Action Is

The Basic Combat Convoy Course – commonly known as BC3 – manages to stay as current, applicable and valid as possible because its instructors are never too far from the pointy end of the spear, according to Master Sgt. Craig Dougherty, superintendent of BC3, which falls under the 342nd Training Squadron at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Every six months, two to three members of the instructor cadre travel to the area of responsibility in Afghanistan or Iraq to see how operations are going, he said.

“The instructors personally go on a combat convoy or two and talk to leaders and troops on the ground,” Dougherty said.

Their goal is to gather intelligence on anything that might

need to be updated or altered in the curriculum based on real world changes, he said. That not only includes surviving the enemy, but surviving themselves as well. In the recent past, more troops in Afghanistan and Iraq were dying from preventable mishaps, such as vehicle accidents, than at the hands of the enemy. The cadre wants to prevent both.

So by deploying to areas of conflict, the instructors are able to bring the most realistic training back to their students, Dougherty explained.

It doesn’t take long for Camacho and his fellow trainees to get a taste of that realism ...

Train Like They Fight

The crunching of tires over gravel interrupts the symphony of insects in the quiet Texas night. Headlights invade the darkness as eight vehicles move along a convoluted route in the rolling, wooded terrain of Camp Anderson-Peters.

Inside the second vehicle, a Humvee with the call sign “Gun 2,” four Airmen spend one of their few remaining nights in America for a long while, watching for danger and testing each other’s skills. The Airmen are part of a group of 28 transportation specialists completing the Basic Combat Convoy Course before a six-month deployment to Afghanistan (only the second class specifically trained for the missions in Afghanistan).

A dim red light comes and goes inside the cab of Gun 2 as Camacho scans a map of their route. The momentary silence is broken as the truck commander corrects Airman 1st Class Dennis Rogeski on his driving habits.

“Rogeski! Middle of the road!” Camacho snarls. “When we’re in country, I need you to be afraid of the sides of the road!”

The Men Behind Gun 2

Rogeski has been in the Air Force only nine months. His proficiency belies his youth. New to the Air Force, newly married and with a new baby girl at home, the BC3 training marks the bright, confident Airman's first temporary duty assignment. Yet, he will be a combat veteran before his infant daughter's first birthday and his own first anniversary in the service.

In comparison, Camacho is a grizzled veteran. He has been through the course before ... and he's been to war. The 13-year veteran was among the first trainees to attend BC3 when it was established in mid-2004, and he deployed to conduct convoy operations in Iraq following that training. He is the consummate "leader from within" – and one of several members who have previously trained at the camp and then deployed.

With the lessons of war in mind, Camacho's voice frequently cuts through the occasionally monotonous drive as he quizzes Rogeski and the other members of Gun 2 – Senior Airman Christopher Templeton and Airman 1st Class Oscar Martinez-Escobar – on policies and procedures. The Airmen display an impressive knowledge level as they answer most questions correctly.

Assigned to the combat lifesaver/assistant gunner position, Templeton has the quiet confidence and "been there, done that" demeanor one might expect of a seasoned combat veteran. Having completed a deployment to Iraq as a combat vehicle operator, where he was part of "160 or more convoys," he reacts quickly and efficiently to situations he encounters. Cool under pressure, it's tough to tell if he's more eager for the next simulated firefight or hitting up Rogeski for his stash of hard candy along the way – but he's equally adept at making the candy or the enemy disappear.

Martinez, a 21-year old father of three, is a lanky, quiet young man who does not hesitate to make noise with his .50 caliber machine gun from the gunner's mount when the convoy is threatened. He

Vehicles form a "box," much like circling the wagons, when under attack, while a "gunner," such as Airman 1st Class Daniel Ash, a student from the 49th Logistic Readiness Squadron, Holloman AFB, N.M., protects the convoy.

struggles often while trying to swing the heavy weapon around in the turret, but never gives up until "Ma Deuce" is trained in the direction he needs her.



Traffic Control Points

As the crew of Gun 2 approaches an intersection in the road ahead, Camacho yells "TCP! TCP!" – short for traffic control point. Instantly, the Humvee accelerates as Rogeski maneuvers around the lead vehicle and stops broadside across the intersecting road. Martinez swings the M-2 around to cover the direction.

"We do this at traffic control points to make sure no other vehicle can compromise the convoy," Camacho explained.

It was a drill to be repeated many times during the trip. Any intersecting road prompted Gun 2 to spring into action while the other vehicles passed. Gun 2 then had to get back into position, passing other vehicles on narrow roads that at any point may have an IED lying in wait.

Suddenly, Gun 2 grinds to a halt behind the lead vehicle.

Casualties of War

"Gun 5 got hit ... two casualties," said Camacho while listening to the truck's radio communications unit.

Martinez prepares to signal the medical evacuation chopper when it is in range, as the other vehicles in the convoy form a "box" behind Gun 2. Moments later, Gun 4 screams up the road and joins the back of the box. Airmen bail out quickly as their buddies take defensive positions to cover them



Getting it right. At top, BC3 instructor Staff Sgt. Stuart Jordan corrects Amn. Marcelino Galindo Mariano Jr., a student from the 49th Logistic Readiness Squadron, Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., after undergoing an Arab attack scenario. Then Stuart turns his attention to Airman 1st Class Dennis Rogeski, a student from the 92nd Logistic Readiness Squadron, Fairchild AFB, Wash.





Casualties can be a grim reality of combat convoys. Staff Sgt. David Camacho (left), a student from the 35th Logistic Readiness Squadron, Misawa Air Base, Japan, and Airman 1st Class Dennis Rogeski (right), of the 92nd Logistic Readiness Squadron, Fairchild AFB, Wash., lead a casualty extraction via litter.

in the event of enemy fire. They drag their two wounded comrades from Gun 5 into the relative shelter of the middle of the box and begin to assess the simulated injuries.

Before the first tourniquet can be applied, muzzle flashes light up the surrounding woods like a firefly mating extravaganza. Airmen scramble into position, seeking protection while returning fire against the “hostiles.”

The instructors of BC3 have set up an attack of the convoy’s rally point. The students lost situational awareness, and they decided to rally entirely too close to the kill zone. There’s a price to pay for such carelessness.

Now the students have two immediate missions: Save the injured, and stay alive themselves.

In the relative shelter of the box, a team of two works on each of the IED casualties. One suffers from facial wounds, and the other is losing an arm. During the classroom portion of the training course, all students receive hands-on training in combat lifesaving



Students get to practice what they learn during the casualty care portion of their training, including administering an IV and bandaging wounds.

skills – the training Army soldiers get to treat wounded in the field until professional care is available. The training includes administering an IV, proper tourniquet procedures and many other first aid skills.

In the heat of the moment, most of these skills have left the mind of one Airman providing care.

“Maybe you should put a tourniquet on, so your buddy doesn’t lose an arm,” yells Tech. Sgt. Jody Clary, an independent duty medical technician serving on the cadre as both medical instructor and as a real medic to prevent and treat any real-world injuries during the training.

As precious minutes go by, Clary grows more disappointed with the trainee’s performance.

“He’s bleeding out!” she says, knowing that in a real-world situation the injured man would be dying by now.

Eventually, the cadre declares the victim “KIA” – or killed in action.

“All four of you are going to write letters to his family when this is done,

explaining to them why their son died,” Clary instructs. “You failed as a team, and he lost his life.”

Time to Regroup

After the team successfully simulates medically evacuating the other casualty, the cadre debriefs the students and challenges them to get it together for the rest of the exercise.

“You all are about to deploy to a war zone!” says Staff Sgt. Wayne Tokarz, a member of the cadre. “You guys *will* get attacked. How many of you here want to put that body in a body bag and take it with you back to base?”

Failure in training brings the wrath of instructors; failure in theater brings officers in blue service dress uniforms to the door of a friend’s parents.

The convoy members mount up and move on down the road. An air of solemnity hangs over the members of Gun 2.

“We’ve got to get it together, man!” says Templeton, to no one in particular.

“Yeah! Now they’re really gonna hit us hard,” Rogeski predicts as he thinks about his angry instructors.

Several IED and small arms fire attacks later, the smell of sweat in the cab of Gun 2 is only overpowered by the acrid scent of gunpowder from many .50 caliber blank shells. Martinez has nearly exhausted Gun 2’s limited supply of ammo in cutting down “insurgents” opposing the convoy. The team, as expected by the instructors, did improve from the shaky performance at the beginning of the night.

Until recently, most of these Airmen were driving pilots to the flight line and general officers to meetings. Now they showed the camaraderie and skill sets of troops in war.

“We’re almost there!” Rogeski hollers, with a sense of relief.

At a Crossroads

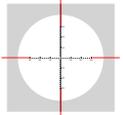
As the team reaches the final intersection in their field exercise, they find themselves at a crossroads. This week, they faced blank rounds and powder-filled balloon IEDs. ... Next week, it’s for real.

Camacho said he hopes no one else has to learn about the importance of this training the way he and his platoon did that August day nearly three years ago when Anderson lost his life.

Humvee teams, armed with gunners like Airman 1st Class Roberto Maldonado, a student from the 92nd LRS, Fairchild AFB, remain vigilant in protecting the combat convoy.

They have trained as they will fight ... now they must fight as they trained.✈

Sergeant Hammond is with the Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs Office.



Tips for Driving in a Convoy ... or on the Highway

✦ **Wear seat belts.** Seat belts save lives on the highway and in combat convoys. It can be cumbersome for Airmen wearing flak jackets, backpacks, weapons and other equipment, but it’s vitally important to their survival.

✦ **Keep a proper interval distance between vehicles.** This is good advice whether you are driving on the highway or in a combat convoy, as it leaves proper stopping distance and prevents mishaps. However, it is especially imperative in combat convoys for two big reasons: 1) Fully loaded tractor trailers require greater stopping distances than your average highway vehicle; and 2) If an improvised explosive device goes off and you are following too closely, it could cost the convoy two vehicles instead of just one.

✦ **Prevent rollovers.** Vehicle rollovers cause many fatalities. They are especially prevalent in deployments. Not being comfortable with the type of vehicle you’re driving; losing situational awareness and driving off-road; driving on steep slopes or hitting potholes; stopping or turning too quickly; speeding; panicking and overcorrecting by jerking and steering wheel; and lack of driving discipline (goofing off) can all lead to lethal rollovers.

— Staff Sgt. Wayne Tokarz
BC3 cadre instructor



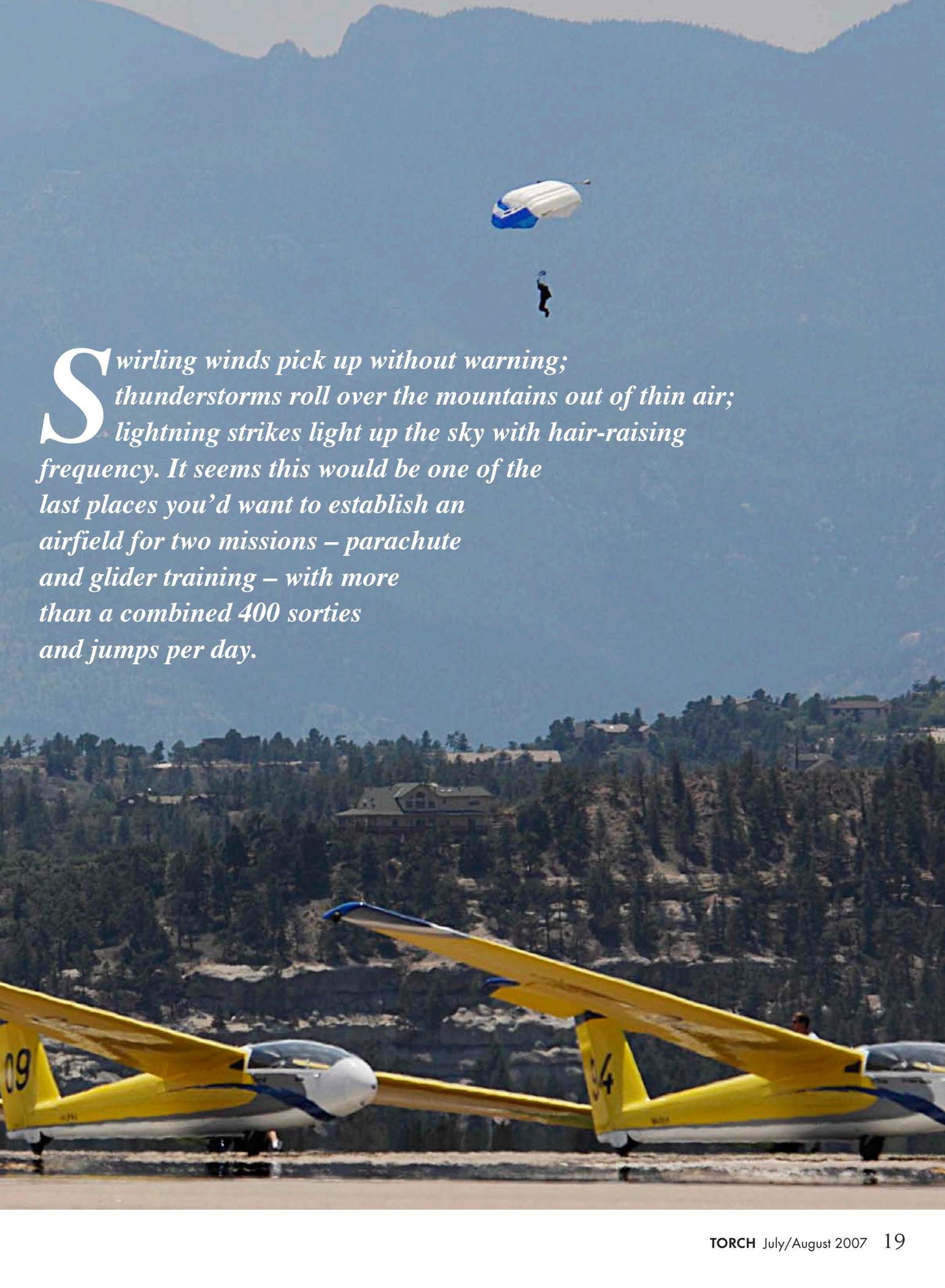
With cadets parachuting out of airplanes and flying gliders, the skies above the U.S. Air Force Academy are nearly always buzzing with activity. Despite a crowded airfield and challenging weather, the 306th Flying Training Group sports an excellent safety record.

2's Company 400's a Crowd

Air Force Academy manages one of the world's busiest flight lines

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. MATTHEW HANNEN



A person is parachuting over a mountain range. The parachute is white with blue accents. In the foreground, two yellow gliders are parked on a runway. The glider on the left has the number '09' on its tail, and the one on the right has '14'. The background shows a hazy mountain range under a clear sky.

*S*wirling winds pick up without warning;
thunderstorms roll over the mountains out of thin air;
lightning strikes light up the sky with hair-raising
frequency. It seems this would be one of the
last places you'd want to establish an
airfield for two missions – parachute
and glider training – with more
than a combined 400 sorties
and jumps per day.



Waiting for a tow,
Cadets Gyscar Inocencia-Holloway
(front) and Brian Schaf prepare for
a glider sortie.



Preparing a glider for training.

Cadet Josh Hughes helps push the aircraft onto the runway.

ing Training Group flight safety officer at the academy. “Our safety record is one of the (best) in the Air Force.”

As a matter of fact, the academy’s last Class A mishap (those that cost \$1 million or more) occurred in 2002 when a glider experienced a structural failure. The cadet bailed out, suffering no injuries. The glider, however, was a total loss.

“When talking about parachutes and gliders, the wind can wreak havoc,” said Capt. Tammer Mahdy, 306th FTG safety officer. “You can only do so

much with a parachute. If a strong wind takes your chute, it takes you.”

Weather challenges student training every day. And with so much activity going on, this 4,500-foot airfield can tend to seem small.

“We need to carefully coordinate our (flying activities) to make sure everybody is clear so nobody has any mid air collisions,” said Cadet Josh Gunderson, glider instructor pilot. “The gliders, parachutists and the Twin Otter aircraft could easily

cross paths. The fact that they don’t very often is amazing.”

With a combination of inexperienced students, bad weather, gliders, parachutes and Twin Otter aircraft, the Academy had to establish some safeguards to protect their students.

For instance, on the skydiving side, they switched from round chutes to square chutes in 1995 to give students more control when landing. This cuts down on off-field landings (such as on roads) and injuries. For the gliders, there are alternate landing fields near the airfield just in case the students can’t make it back to the runway safely.

Additionally, when crossing the runway there is an alarm to let students know when aircraft are approaching.

“The cadets do great safety-wise because of their training and supervision,” Henderlong said. “We are not trying to make outstanding pilots or skydivers out of them. We are trying to provide leadership through airmanship, and safety is a huge piece of that. They are getting exposed to safety early on in their careers and will be able to take that experience with them wherever they go.” ✈

But for the U.S. Air Force Academy airfield located at the foot of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado Springs, Colo., it’s business as usual. Not only do they overcome significant weather obstacles, they sport the busiest visual flight rules airfield in the world with the youngest student pilots in the Air Force. They fly more than 200 glider sorties per day and do nearly as many parachute jumps.

“For the amount of sorties we do a year, we have an amazing safety record,” said Capt. Keith Henderlong, 306th Fly-



After a successful jump,
cadets gather up their parachutes and head back to the squadron.

DISTURBING TREND

AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT MISHAPS ON THE RISE

By Maj. Gen. **WENDELL L. GRIFFIN**
Photo by Tech. Sgt. **JEFFREY ALLEN**





The following is a July 3 memorandum from Air Force Chief of Safety Maj. Gen. Wendell L. Griffin to major command vice commanders, imploring them to help reverse the negative trend in Air Force aircraft mishaps this year.

“Amongst the ruins of 13 aircraft and three fatalities lies a troubling trend. Questionable risk management, poor decision making, and inattentive maintenance and flying appear to be contributors in most of these accidents.”

Last year the Air Force had an outstanding aviation safety year, setting three new records along the way: lowest Class A flight mishap rate, fewest aviation-related fatalities and fewest destroyed aircraft in Air Force history.

However, this year is quite another story.

We are experiencing a disturbing trend within the aviation community. I am deeply concerned about it ... as I am sure you are too.

As we enter the fourth quarter of fiscal 2007, already we have destroyed 12 aircraft in training mishaps — 50 percent more than all of fiscal 2006 — and have lost one aircraft in combat. Even more disturbing, we have tragically and irreplaceably lost three outstanding Airmen. Amongst the ruins of 13 aircraft and three fatalities lies a troubling trend. Questionable risk management, poor decision making, and inattentive maintenance and flying appear to be contributors in most of these accidents.

Over the past six decades as an independent service, we have steadily improved our safety programs to the pinnacle that was last year’s performance; however, we have come to expect such performances as the norm. We have forgotten the hard work and vigilance that is required to make years such as fiscal 2006 so successful. We cannot afford to become complacent, let our guard down and lose commander focus when it comes to safety.

In that vein, I am writing to seek your assistance as commanders and leaders to re-focus attention on our aviation safety community. It is no mistake that safety is a commander’s program, and that the best of these programs begin with a focused effort from the very top down. I ask you do all within your power to refocus your commanders at all levels. Discuss this issue in your commander’s calls and staff meetings, make safety a regular part of your metrics, and encourage your operations directorates to make this a “Special Interest Item.”

I also urge you to use any other means you see fit to reverse this trend of preventable accidents.

I welcome any ideas or suggestions you or your staff believe may help us win this battle, and I encourage crosstalk between us all. With your help, I am convinced we can reverse this deadly trend and create a lasting culture of safety for decades to come.

In Air Education and Training Command, there have been five Class A (costing \$1 million or more) aircraft mishaps, including two T-38 Talon (at left) crashes – one from Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., on Jan. 18 and one from Randolph AFB, Texas, on Feb. 22. The other three mishaps included two F-16 Fighting Falcons from Luke AFB, Ariz., on Oct. 26 and Dec. 4, and a C-17 Globemaster III from Altus AFB, Okla., on Jan. 31. “As such, the AETC safety team is committed to do whatever it takes to enhance flight safety,” according to Col. John W. Blumentritt, AETC director of safety.

F-22 TEAM EARNS KUDOS

FOR WARFIGHTING SYSTEM PROWESS, SAFETY



by Senior Master Sgt. Thomas Meneguini

Earning the Collier Trophy, the F-22 has been a success story for the warfighter and industry from its inception, according to the secretary of the Air Force. It has pushed limits in terms of performance, safety, readiness and most importantly, its warfighting prowess.

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — The National Aeronautic Association presented its Robert J. Collier Trophy to the Lockheed Martin Corporation for their role in the development of the Air Force's F-22 Raptor.

The Air Force was part of the team awarded the honor, one of the nation's most prestigious prizes for aeronautical and space development.

"The F-22 has been a success story for the warfighter and industry from its inception," said Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne. "The Raptor has pushed limits in terms of performance, safety, readiness and most importantly, its warfighting prowess. Just by having this weapons system in our inventory we provide the nation sovereign options."

The award submission focused heavily on the F-22's perfor-

mance during the 2006 Northern Edge exercise where Raptors flew 97 percent of their assigned training sorties, F-22 pilots scored an "unheard of" 80-to-1 kill ratio against their opponents, scored direct hits with 100 percent of their 1,000-pound GBU-32 joint direct attack munition air-to-ground weapons and increased overall situational awareness for their entire team through the F-22's integrated avionics package.

"The Collier award is not only a tremendous honor for the entire F-22 team, but also a wonderful tribute to the visionaries who conceived the Raptor and the warfighters who fly and support this revolutionary aircraft every day," said Larry Lawson, executive vice president and F-22 program general manager. "What Airmen did in Alaska last year is only a sign of great things to come in 2007 and beyond."

CADETS RESEARCH **FUEL LINE BACTERIA**

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. (AFNEWS) — Bacteria that can survive on jet fuel is not something one might think about. But, that same microscopic bacteria can bring down a multi-million dollar aircraft.

Cadet 1st Class Jonathan Stralka peers at a small tube filled with jet fuel. Inside is the culprit responsible for fouling jet engines with a type of slime. That slime is a byproduct of microscopic bacteria that eats jet fuel.

Maj. Michelle Rauch, assistant professor of chemis-

try at the Air Force Academy, said the goo has been an ongoing problem for aircraft.

“Ever since we’ve been flying jets we’ve realized bugs can grow in our fuel,” she said. “Essentially bacteria and fungus need a carbon source and jet fuel is made up of long hydrocarbon chains, so it’s a really great way for them to chew up the hydrocarbon chains.”

Rauch said Air Force’s missions contribute to the problem.

“We’re taking off, we’re landing in lots of different places, we de-fuel, we refuel in the air,” she said. “So if you

think about how we pass colds to one another, if there is bacteria in the fuel system, it can be transferred from point to point because our fuel system tends to be so ubiquitous.”

While this research will help prevent problems with aircraft, it also could help show how to clean up the environment by finding a way to use the fuel eating bacteria to clean up fuel spills.

— *Tech. Sgt. Steve German*
Air Force News Agency



by 1st Lt. John Ross

Transferring bacteria from jet fuel into culture tubes, Cadet 1st Class Brandon Martinez works in a laboratory at the Air Force Academy. The bacteria eat jet fuel and produce a slime that can foul jet engines. The research is part of his curriculum.

F-16 PILOT LANDS AIRCRAFT **AFTER HAVING STROKE**

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. John D. W. Corley presented the Koren Kolligian Jr. Trophy, one of the service’s top safety awards, to a fighter pilot during a ceremony June 5 in the Pentagon’s Hall of Heroes. Assisting in the presentation was Koren Kolligian, nephew of the trophy’s namesake.

The award recipient, Lt. Col. Peter Byrne, was honored for an incident last June in which he had a stroke while flying an F-16 Fighting Falcon out of Buckley Air Force Base, Colo. Byrne kept his jet aloft for another 90 minutes before returning to Buckley.

“Living through a stroke with immediate care is tough enough,” Corley said of the Air National Guardsman. “To do it while flying an F-16 is superhuman.”

The Kolligian Trophy is awarded annually for “outstanding feats of Airmanship by aircrew members who by extraordinary skill, exceptional alertness, ingenuity or proficiency, averted accidents or minimized the seriousness of accidents in terms of injury, loss of life, aircraft damage or property damage.”

Byrne’s decisive actions and ability to cope with the traumatic event prevented a potentially catastrophic mishap. While engaged in tactical combat maneuvers, he felt a pinching

in his neck, what would later be diagnosed as the dissection of his vertebral artery.

“I could barely move my arms or hands,” said Byrne, 140th Wing vice commander. “It took every bit of concentration I had just to get the autopilot on.”

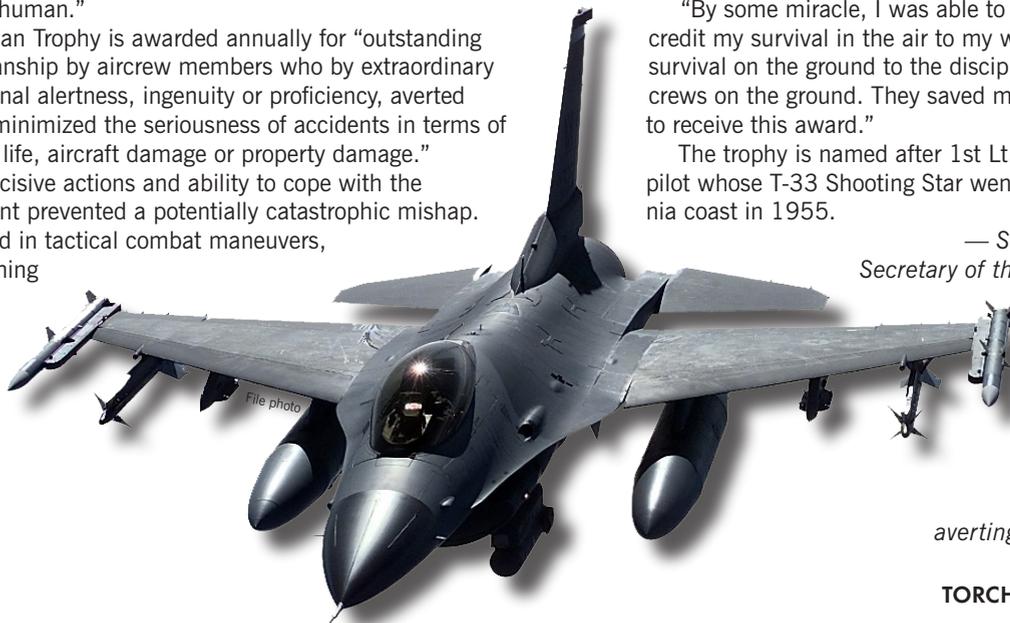
Fighting vertigo, pain and nausea, Byrne said his primary concern was avoiding populated areas in case he had to eject. His wingmen quickly came to his aid and flew with him for the next hour and a half, helping him stay focused.

With fuel running low, Byrne’s symptoms eased enough for him to coax the F-16 back to Buckley for a perfect landing.

“By some miracle, I was able to land,” Byrne said. “I credit my survival in the air to my wingmen, and I credit my survival on the ground to the discipline and efforts of the crews on the ground. They saved my life. It’s truly an honor to receive this award.”

The trophy is named after 1st Lt. Koren Kolligian Jr., a pilot whose T-33 Shooting Star went missing off the California coast in 1955.

— *Staff Sgt. J.G. Buzanowski*
Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs



When an F-16 pilot had a stroke while flying, he still managed to land his aircraft safely with the help of his wingmen, averting a potential catastrophe.

