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by Senior Airman Erik Hohmeyer

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WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

Team safety is the only way to fight back

"We must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately."
– Benjamin Franklin

Throughout military history, it's the armies that came together as a cohesive team that enjoyed the most victories. The lesson conveyed also applies to team safety.

The Air Education and Training Command Safety Directorate is a team dedicated to serving you. Last issue you met Col. John Blumentritt, the new director of safety. He brings with him more than 3,000 flying hours, four master's degrees and a vast and varied 22-year Air Force career, including nearly a decade in safety. But his experience just begins to tell the story of the AETC safety team.

Together, the team of professionals who make up the AETC Safety Directorate has nearly 250 years of experience in ground, weapons and flight safety. They've flown more than 30,000 hours in over 60 different airframes. They've been involved in some 15,000 mishap investigations, ranging from drunken driving and motorcycle deaths to gunshot wounds and aircraft crashes. The directorate, armed with this immense experience, exists solely to serve your safety needs.

But even with all of those years of experience, the directorate needs you to make safety work. A fatal car accident, a serious sports injury or an electrical burn may negate a combat sortie or negatively affect the mission in countless other ways.

That's why a successful mishap prevention and risk management program begins with each and every one of us. If we damage a critical piece of equipment, we lose capability. If we become injured, or even leave work because of an injured family member, our absence renders us mission ineffective.

Colonel Blumentritt's safety policy is direct and simple: Fight back!

Consequently, the team of professionals in the AETC Safety Directorate is committed to helping you achieve a safer lifestyle. Nevertheless, a strong command safety program is valueless without your support. Therefore, together as a team, we must be proactive in risk management to fight back and, ultimately, save valuable equipment and lives.

"If we damage a critical piece of equipment, we lose capability. If we become injured, or even leave work because of an injured family member, our absence renders us mission ineffective."

SHELL GAME

I really liked the Torch cover for the November/December 2006 issue. The photo was awesome, and the story was interesting. I always thought they should include more weapons training in basic. Keep up the good work.

*Mitch Grothues
Via e-mail*

AND FURTHERMORE

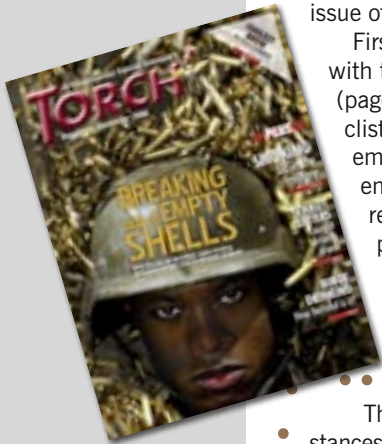
I have two comments from your Torch Talk letters to the editor section in the November/December 2006 issue of Torch.

First, talk about an overreaction by the reader with the letter titled "Photo Stirs Bad Memories" (page 2). The photo you ran of the motorcyclist without the helmet was obviously used to emphasize the subject of the story – that is, not enough people were wearing helmets. For the reader to say that he was "horrified" by the picture was a bit dramatic, to say the least. I doubt many shared his opinion.

On another note, the letter titled "Why Am I Alive Today?" (page 3) really hammers home the point that seat belts save lives. I, too, was involved in an accident and believe I am alive today because I buckled up. More importantly, my 3-year-old child who was with me also survived, secure in a child safety seat. In this day and age with all the information, statistics and publicity, it's still hard for me to believe that there are people who don't wear their seat belt.

Keep spreading the word.

*Capt. Chris Price
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.

DISTURBING DEATH

The story "Unusual Circumstances Lead to Airman's Death" (Around the Command, November/December 2006 issue, page 4) is very disturbing. It got me thinking about all the times I've slid over to

the passenger seat when my husband and I swap places on road trips. I've bumped the emergency brake, the steering wheel, the gear shifter, etc., while sliding from the driver's seat to the passenger seat,

but I guess I've just been lucky. I'm thinking I'll probably just exit the vehicle to switch spots next time. What a tragedy.

*Gloria Sorrell
Via e-mail*

BAN SMOKING?

I never really thought of smoking negatively affecting force readiness as stated in your article "Smoking Up in the Military" (November/December 2006 Torch, page 14). However, if smoking really decreases readiness by "impairing night vision, weakening the immune system and lengthening healing time," then maybe it's time for the military to eliminate smoking in a wartime environment.

How can you justify allowing something that decreases wartime readiness? How is it any different than maintaining a certain fitness standard to optimize readiness? I know the military will probably never go to that extreme, but it does beg the question: Why not?

*Capt. R.B. Brown
Via e-mail*

TEN YEARS AND COUNTING

I have been a reader of Torch for the past 10 years, and I find your magazine informative and helpful. We use some of your articles for our safety briefings.

*Chief Master Sgt. Rogelio G. Guerra
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas*



AWESOME POSTER

I just saw Torch's "Ambition" poster with the pilot/helmet picture, and I thought it was awesome! How can I obtain a set of the posters published by Torch?

*Maj. Jesse E. Ortega
Via e-mail*

The Torch poster series can be obtained by e-mailing torch.magazine@randolph.af.mil. Please ensure your request includes the specific posters you want, the quantity of each, and your full unit mailing address.

ON-LINE & FINE

I'm a retired master sergeant, and used to be stationed at Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field, Ariz., from 1984 to 1986 at the crash recovery/transient alert. In our "spare time," we were responsible for, and did quite a bit of refurbishing work on, the static display aircraft at "The Bend." Anyway, I like to keep up on the old haunts, so thanks for providing Torch on-line.

*Rene' Stevens
Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.*

We were wondering if we could have permission to distribute your Web site to our members at the 4th Wing?

*Sharun Dodge
Cold Lake, Alberta, Canada*

Yes, we encourage you to pass along our Web site to help spread the safety, risk management and mishap prevention message. Our site is a public site, so there is no problem in sharing the link with others. Thank you for your interest in Torch.

2007 TORCH CALENDAR



Well done on the 2007 Torch Calendar – great photos!

*Retired Gen. William V. McBride
San Antonio*

The Air Education and Training Command Torch Calendars are the best!

*Maj. Dawn L. Werner
Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.*

Everybody in my office has thoroughly enjoyed your outstanding calendars. We also shared some with our Web site visitors and other colleagues. The calendars all reached people that really appreciate the great work you folks do!

*Paul Zasada
Watertown, Conn.*

Thanks again for your support and another great calendar. We enjoy the magazine and the calendars very much. They are a good motivator for my folks and those visiting our offices.

*Col. Mike McKenna
Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.*

We greatly enjoy the photos and facts compiled in the Torch Calendar.

*J. David Lambright
Raleigh, N.C.*

I have been requesting your calendars for the last three or four years, and I really appreciate receiving them. The calendars have a great format and are chock full of great military aircraft photos, along with loads of interesting factoids, feature information and pertinent data.

*Richard Garcia
San Antonio*

I attended an air safety meeting last year where your 2006 Torch calendars were distributed. Fantastic photos! I picked up about five of them and shared them with fellow aviation enthusiasts at the company. I look forward to the 2007 calendar.

*Douglas A. Draves
San Antonio*

The photographs in the calendar have been really good quality – a nice product overall.

*Maj. Roland S. Dansereau
Houston*

Thank you very much for the 2007 Torch Calendars. You guys are GREAT! I really enjoy the aircraft photos. Have a great 2007.

*Rafael Tebis
Los Angeles*

DOD TASK FORCE CONSIDERS CRACKDOWN FOR DRIVERS

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Servicemembers could expect stricter consequences for engaging in unsafe behavior behind the wheel if changes suggested by a Defense Department safety task force are implemented.

The Private Motor Vehicle Accident Reduction Task Force is looking at changing how the services handle driving infractions to help reduce the death and accident rates of military men and women when operating their own vehicles and motorcycles. The task force plans to submit its suggestions to the Defense Safety Oversight Council, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness this February.

For irresponsible drivers this would mean facing real consequences that could affect personal and professional lives, including losing the ability to be promoted and forfeiting driving privileges on base, said Maj. Gen. David Bice, inspector general of the Marine Corps and chairman of the task force.

"Much has been done to educate people about what can happen if they are irresponsible behind the wheel. However, there are too many people that hear the message, but don't heed it," Bice said.

"While education on this issue is still important, the PMV task force believes tightening enforcement practices will be the most effective way to bring about change," he said.

We are looking at ways to improve the department's enforcement system and make it clear the military is serious about safety both on and off the base," the general said.

In a June 22 memorandum, then Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld reiterated his directive to reduce all safety-related incidents within DOD by 75 percent by the end of fiscal 2008. The PMV task force is one of eight safety task forces under the Defense Safety Oversight Council, which was created to find ways to meet that goal.

To gain a greater understanding of current law enforcement procedures, the task force began examining how each service handles driving infractions and the maintenance of driving records.

"What we have found are a lot of inconsistencies — not just between services, but within them as well," Bice said.

The department lacks a centralized system that allows for the sharing of driving data and sanctions between services and installations, he said. The task force is looking at ways to put such a system in place that also includes information sharing with local motor vehicle departments.

"We want to create a commanding-officer environment off base, so troops know they are responsible for their actions no matter where they go," he said.



by Airman Stacy Garcia

For irresponsible drivers, potential new rules could mean facing real consequences that could affect personal and professional lives, including losing the ability to be promoted and forfeiting driving privileges.

"We are trying to build on the good work already being done by each of the services so we can preserve our most valuable resource, which is our men and women," Bice said.

An integrated system would allow law enforcement to draw on comprehensive driving record information, giving installation commanders the ability to make more informed decisions about driving privileges, said John Awtrey, director of law enforcement policy and support at DOD and a member of the task force.

"Having integrated electronic data would speed the process for taking positive action against individuals who would still be driving with the current inconsistencies in driving record information and data sharing," Awtrey said.

The PMV also is evaluating a variety of other factors to determine the best ways to prevent private motor vehicle related deaths and accidents, including driving trends for 18- to 25-year-olds, the top causes of accidents, and leading indicators, or behaviors, that predict who is most susceptible to being involved in an accident.

Choice is what links all other variables leading to car crashes, said Renee Reitz, a psychologist overseeing the development of a Driver Behavior Assessment Tool for DOD. This tool is a computerized questionnaire that assesses how servicemembers' personal attitudes and beliefs are related to involvement in vehicle crashes.

"I am a firm believer that choice is the key to safe driving," Reitz said. "The work of the DBAT research team is focused on pre-identifying servicemembers who are likely to make unsafe driving choices based on the 'self' they put behind the wheel. We want to help servicemembers recognize their own tendency to make unsafe choices while driving."

— Kim Sears
American Forces Press Service

AETC ANNOUNCES 2006 SAFETY AWARDS



by Staff Sgt. Matthew Hammen

The 314th Airlift Wing from Little Rock AFB, Ark., took the top unit award.

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) – Air Education and Training Command announced the winners of the fiscal 2006 AETC Safety Awards Dec. 8.

The 314th Airlift Wing from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., took the top unit award, while Master Sgt. Michael Griffith of Lackland AFB, Texas, earned the highest individual honors.

“It’s not easy to earn these awards; we had a lot of impressive nominations,” said Col. John Blumentritt, AETC director of safety. “But in the end, the 314th stood out as the wing with the best overall safety program, and Sergeant Griffith’s outstanding

efforts to the safety program made him deserving of being singled out as the top safety professional. Congratulations to the winners and all the nominees that made this year’s competition so tough to judge.”

Awards and winners include:

- To Promote Safety (TOPS) Trophy (the most effective overall safety program): 314th AW
- Gen. Frank P. Lahm Trophy (the most effective flight safety program): 314th AW
- Ground Safety Excellence Award: 37th Training Wing, Lackland
- Weapons Safety Excellence Award: 37th TRW

■ Safety Professional of the Year: Sergeant Griffith

■ Flight Safety Professional of the Year: Randy Schavrien, Lackland

■ Weapons Safety Professional of the Year: Master Sgt. Jessie Rodriguez, Lackland

■ Ground Safety Manager of the Year: Bernard Bruce, Luke AFB, Ariz.

■ Ground Safety Technician of the Year: Staff Sgt. Darrell Leatherman, Sheppard AFB, Texas

■ Safety Administrative Professional of the Year: Kimberly Bland, Luke

GRENADE MISHAP KILLS TWO CHILDREN

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. – A recent mishap in Bakersfield, Calif., resulting in the death of two children, and the injury of several more, made me wonder, “Is it just a matter of time before an improperly handled explosive souvenir causes a similar tragedy here in the Valley?”

The root cause of most explosive mishaps remains human error. I knew the lesson of this mishap needed to reach beyond the normal explosive safety audience. In this mishap an individual kept a 40mm grenade round as a conversation piece for many years believing it had been rendered inert. After all, the individual reasoned, if the primer and powder were removed from the shell casing it must be safe.

However with only a basic knowledge of explosives, or as I like to refer to it as a movie knowledge, the individual failed to fully comprehend how the round was designed to function. The projectile was live.

No one knows the history of this round; perhaps it was a dud someone picked up on a range or battlefield. That would make it even more danger-

ous because if fired, the internal fuse was likely armed. No one knows for sure, but in the end, it became functional and killed two children who were playing with it.

Display rounds, usually 20mm rounds, should have the primer fired, gun powder expended, and an expert verify the projectile is inert. Avoid assuming that an expended munition or projectile lying in the desert is safe to take home and place on display.

Having worked in the explosives field for more than 25 years, the latter six as a wing weapons safety manager, I’ve investigated many explosive mishaps, and read the reports and findings of many more. By failing to follow established procedures, not being vigilant or well trained, and losing situational awareness, handling explosives can result in death.

The parents of two children know this all too well.

— Thomas Todd
56th Fighter Wing weapons safety manager



DINNER, FIRE AND THE PINK PLAGUE

OKINAWA, Japan – When I decided to surprise my husband Ryan with a homemade chicken cordon bleu meal, little did I realize that I'd be the one to get the biggest shock.

We'd been taking evening Japanese classes all week to help us integrate faster into our new community in Okinawa, so we'd been eating out a lot. I thought a homemade meal would be a nice change. However, Ryan, a helicopter pilot at Okinawa Air Base, had scarcely returned home from work and kissed me hello before I noticed his concerned expression. Two consecutive, cautiously shallow sniffs only deepened the lines of concern.

Two more sniffs were quickly followed by, "Do you smell plastic burning?"

I looked down at the oven window, which looked sickeningly similar to an electric fireplace. ... I screamed.

Fortunately, Ryan's "rescuer" instincts kicked in before I could inflict too much vocal cord damage. He gave those flames a quick and humiliating demise, using the extinguisher to dress them up in pink and then suffocate them to death!

After the smoke cleared (literally), Ryan reached into the drawer below the oven where I store cookie sheets. He produced a handle that had once been attached to a plastic cutting board, but now its only accessory was a few white tentacles, like strings of melted marshmallow.

I kicked myself for storing an obvious fire hazard beneath our habitually volatile oven. I can't pretend that our Japanese oven's propensity for overheating its surroundings was a new discovery. After all, I had

previously used the heated countertops adjacent to the oven to melt butter for cracker chicken. I considered the counter's melting power to be a very nice feature since we don't have a microwave, but I failed to recognize the drawbacks ... like say, kitchen fires.

My lack of preparedness was even more disturbing than my lack of commonsense. What would I have done if Ryan hadn't been there? Would I even have known how to use a Japanese fire extinguisher? What if that first line of defense failed? I realized that I didn't even know the Japanese equivalent for 911.

I suddenly had visions of myself running down the street, screaming, banging on people's doors, trying desperately to communicate, and creating an unprecedented ruckus in the quiet town of Kitanakagusuku-son.

This vision combined with the on-again, off-again shrillness of the fire alarm was too much, and my body was threatening to explode in sobs and tears. I could see Ryan was trying to summon strength he didn't have to keep from laughing. He took me in his arms, but I'm not sure if it was so much to comfort me as it was to hide his smirking face.

After I relaxed a little, he allowed himself a mischievous grin and asked, "This is going to make it into the e-mails, isn't it?"

I had to smile. "Yeah," I said. "I think it qualifies."

He was probably anxious to see this story in the e-mail because it casts him as the hero. And without a doubt, Ryan is my Superman. But

in this instance, it didn't take long for him to turn back into Clark Kent.

The extinguisher hadn't stopped spewing until it was totally purged of its contents, even after Ryan released the handle. So the giant, pink peppermint heaps in the oven and on the floor were significantly bigger than they needed to be. Being the incredible husband that he is, Ryan told me that he would clean up the residue with the Shop Vac. I was more than happy to let him take over.

Then I heard his wordless groaning noises that always follow an absentminded mistake.

It seems the pundits down at the Shop Vac company got together and made vacuum history by inventing two cleaning tools in one. That's right – our high tech Shop Vac "easily converts into a powerful leaf blower!"

This function may make for a great sales pitch, but if you happen to have a leaf-blowing Shop Vac aimed at piles of pink powder, it can also make for a domestic disaster. To quote Steel Magnolias, the place "looked like it's been hosed down with Pepto Bismol!" It was everywhere, even on top of the fridge.

Thankfully, we survived the fire and the pink plague, and came out of it red-faced, but a bit wiser as well.

— Brandess
Coates



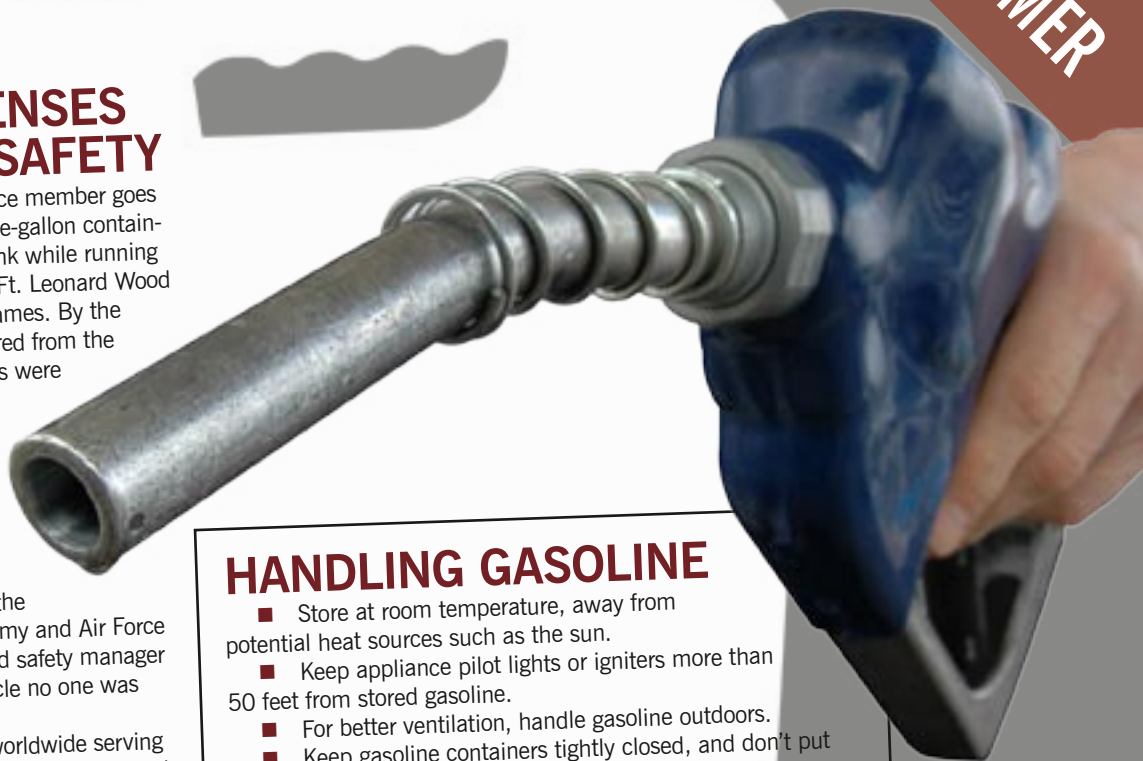
AAFES DISPENSES FUEL PUMP SAFETY

DALLAS – A military service member goes to the gas pump to fill two five-gallon containers, and puts them in the trunk while running errands. After parking at the Ft. Leonard Wood hospital, the car burst into flames. By the time the fire and smoke cleared from the June 5 explosion, 10 vehicles were destroyed.

“The Ft. Leonard Wood Fire Department suspects the fire most likely started when an electrical spark from the tail or brake light ignited fumes that accumulated in the hot enclosed trunk,” said Army and Air Force Exchange Service health and safety manager Mike Myers. “It was a miracle no one was fatally injured.”

With 269 gas stations worldwide serving 11.6 million customers, AAFES has a vested interest in educating military families on the dangers of careless gasoline use.

“Gasoline and other fuels are extremely dangerous, and we must exercise great care when using, transporting or storing them,” Myers said.



HANDLING GASOLINE

- Store at room temperature, away from potential heat sources such as the sun.
- Keep appliance pilot lights or igniters more than 50 feet from stored gasoline.
- For better ventilation, handle gasoline outdoors.
- Keep gasoline containers tightly closed, and don't put them in the trunk for a prolonged period of time.
- Turn off the vehicle engine while refueling.
- Put the vehicle in park and/or set the emergency brake.
- Disable or turn off any auxiliary sources of ignition such as a camper or trailer heater, cooking units or pilot lights.
- Do not smoke, light matches or use lighters at the pump or when using gasoline anywhere else.
- Use only the refueling latch provided on the gasoline dispenser nozzle; never jam the refueling latch on the nozzle open.
- Don't re-enter the vehicle while refueling.
- When dispensing gasoline into a container, use only approved portable containers and place them on the ground to avoid a possible static electricity ignition of fuel vapors. Containers should never be filled while inside a vehicle or its trunk, the bed of a pickup truck or the floor of a trailer.
- When filling a portable container, manually control the nozzle valve throughout the filling process.
- Fill containers no more than 95 percent full to allow for expansion.

— The American Petroleum Institute

AAFES RESTRICTS PURCHASE OF MEDICINES CONTAINING DEXTROMETHORPHAN

DALLAS – Dextromethorphan is a common cough-suppressing ingredient contained in more than 140 over-the-counter cough and cold medicines. When taken as directed and used properly, DXM is safe, but recent media reports and research indicate abuse of DXM is becoming

more of an issue than previously thought.

While there is not yet a legal requirement to flag products with this ingredient, as of Jan. 24 AAFES is voluntarily limiting sales of products with DXM to customers over the age of 18.

A message on the cash regis-

ter will alert cashiers to verify the age of the person buying products with DXM. Customers can still find cough and cold medicines with DXM in the health and beauty care department of their base or post exchange. The only difference customers will encounter will be at checkout.

“AAFES wants to be proactive when it comes to the health of military service members,” said AAFES Sales Directorate Senior Vice President Maggie Burgess. “It is our hope that monitoring DXM sales will ensure our military families are not susceptible to abuse.”

THE COOL SCHOOL

By Staff Sgts. MATTHEW and MARISA HANNEN
Photos by Staff Sgt. MATTHEW HANNEN

THE STUDENT
CLASSROOM
IS A FROZEN
WILDERNESS,
AND THE
LESSON PLAN?
... SURVIVE!



School's in session and Staff Sgt. Daniel Melott, of the 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron, Elemendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, carries his lunch, a rabbit, and some fire wood back to camp.

Many people

recall the tragic death of James Kim, the San Francisco man who became stranded with his family in Oregon's snowy back roads while returning from a Thanksgiving weekend vacation near the end of November.

After being trapped in an icy blizzard for a week, the 35-year-old Kim walked more than 10 miles in rough terrain to seek help for his wife and two children, an infant and a 4-year-old girl. Apparently disoriented, he died of exposure and hypothermia only a half mile from the family's car. Rescue crews found his wife and daughters after they had been missing for nine days. They fully recovered.



While Kim's efforts to save his family were heroic, they were misguided, according to wilderness experts at the Air Force Arctic Survival School, better known as "The Cool School." Located in Fairbanks, Alaska, the school is set up to help people survive in an austere, cold-weather environment.

"You must prioritize, be properly equipped and expect the unexpected at all times," said Master Sgt. Robert Blanchard, Detachment 1, 66th Training Squadron, Arctic Survival School superintendent. "When faced with tough weather terrain and environments, one has to be ready mentally and physically."

In Kim's case, he could have benefited by knowing the "rule of threes" for cold-weather survival:

- 1. You can survive for three hours without shelter.*
- 2. You can survive for three days without water.*
- 3. You can survive for three weeks without food.*

He had shelter (his vehicle), he had access to water (by melting snow), but food was an issue. While the family was hungry, they still could have survived nearly another two weeks without food, according to the "rule of threes." Shelter and water needs win by a landslide.



An F-15C pilot, Capt. Matt Misner (below) of the 390th Fighter Squadron, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, collects wood for a one-man shelter while spending a day isolated from other students. Fighter pilots go through a more intense version of the course than everyone else because they usually fly alone and need to be able to depend on their own skills rather than a group.



Students spend a lot of time away from camp searching for firewood, building shelters, preparing a rescue area and checking snares.

Exiting a two-man shelter, Melott (right) gets ready to start another day of training at "The Cool School."





To signal search and rescue,
Melott learns how to use MK-13
smoke flares.

Because of deployments and unique mission requirements, military members are at increased risk of finding themselves in a cold-weather survival situation. That's why Arctic Survival School was created in 1947. The school was designed to give Department of Defense troops the needed knowledge and confidence to survive if stranded in an unfamiliar environment during the winter.

"The main emphasis of the course is based on learning and remembering how to survive with very little or nothing until you are rescued or affect your own rescue," Blanchard said. "It's perfect for aircrews who might have to eject in an austere area, but the techniques we teach can even be passed on to families and friends. These survival techniques can be used if you have a problem driving, hunting, fishing or anything else during the winter months."

The Cool School teaches students to address basic needs in the field: personal protection, finding shelter, sustenance, health, signaling, recovery and travel.

Instructors even teach students to deal the psychological stressors, like staying

put in a protected area with access to water when every instinct might be telling you to try to walk your way out. If water is scarce, they show you how to find it, as well as how to catch food. Perhaps most importantly, the students are taught how to build shelters and different types of fires. Then, instructors show them how to build and maintain a signal, and how to call in an aircraft with a survival radio.

"Most people aren't equipped to live in arctic environments, and students typically become a bit more difficult to deal with the colder it gets outside," Blanchard said. "They want to be like moths and hang around the fire, which is good, but not all survival lessons can be taught by the fire."

What are some of the top survival mistakes that people die from when situations turn bad?

"The biggest ones, I think, are prioritizing, dehydration and being properly equipped," said Tech. Sgt. Brian Kemmer, one of the school's instructors. "A great deal of survival is just common sense, just thinking about what you are doing. A lot of people would decide they need to keep on walking. They will take off, when they really could have met their needs right where they were."

Even under the watchful eyes of trained instructors, students still make mistakes.

"Several years ago, I found a student trying to melt ice inside his boot," Kemmer said. "At first we couldn't figure out what happened. It turns out he woke up in

'RULE OF THREES'

If stranded in freezing temperatures, it's important to remember the "rule of threes":

- 1** You can survive for three hours without shelter.
- 2** You can survive for three days without water.
- 3** You can survive for three weeks without food.

THE 13TH STUDENT

"The Cool School" sure is a catchy moniker for the Arctic Survival School. But after spending a week with the instructors and 12 students (they affectionately called me the 13th student), I respectfully request a more fitting nickname ... "Freezing My Butt Off U."

With temperatures that dipped as low as -10 degrees Fahrenheit, well below freezing, it was weather more suitable for penguins and polar bears, not photojournalists from cozy San Antonio. Even my camera gear didn't like the cold temps. It froze up under the stress of the extreme climate.

And when the warmth of my breath combined with the icy air to cruelly freeze the metal part of my camera to my face, I knew I was in trouble. Luckily I peeled the camera off before it did any real damage (not that it would make much difference to my mug).

While going to the North Pole less than a month away from Christmas might have made my 4-year-old daughter jealous, it didn't take me long to figure out why even Santa Claus doesn't hang around there during the holidays. Heck, if I was that cold all the time, I'd be looking for any excuse to fly my reindeer to such locations as Miami or Honolulu to deliver presents, too. Not to mention my daughter probably wouldn't have been quite so envious if she'd been forced to eat the "Easter Bunny," like I had to do.

Then, don't even get me started on the mini-avalanche that fell from a treetop right on the crown of my noggin while I was shooting a photo. The icy fingers of the snow sent a chill down my spine. As I stood there like a not-so-cheerful Frosty the Snowman, at least for a moment I made the students forget how cold they were as they laughed uncontrollably at my plight.

When I wasn't fending off an avalanche, I was doing my best to keep the frost off of my glasses. It



by Senior Airman Rachel Walters

At temperatures below zero, Staff Sgt. Matt Hannen might have gotten his wires crossed. This isn't the same "Cool School" the Fonz attended.

was already tough enough to see, as the sun barely peeks at this northern country in December.

Handling my camera in the elements also made my fingers go numb. And as they thawed, it felt as though they were being repeatedly pierced by a thousand tiny needles.

All I really wanted to do was cling to the fire so I could stay warm.

I'd actually been to Arctic Survival School back in 2004. That experience served me well on this photo shoot. I drank plenty of water to stay hydrated. I layered clothes and monitored my activity so I wouldn't sweat, because sweat freezes and I had no intention of turning into a human Popsicle. I wore a pair of wool gloves to ensure my fingers didn't stick to the metal camera, and took care of all my extremities to prevent frostbite.

As all of my Cool School training started coming back to me and I put it to good use, I had to smile even as I shivered. ...

I'd never been so happy to have been an alumnus of "Freeze My Butt Off U."

— Staff Sgt. Matthew Hannen



Arctic Survival School instructor

Staff Sgt. Jason Clapper demonstrates how to build a snow plug to block cold air from coming in a shelter entrance.

A fire in his eyes:
Master Sgt. Joseph Cattell
of the 962nd Airborne
Air Control Squadron at
Elemendorf "reflects on
a survival essential – fire.
Airman 1st Class Jordan
Bender (far right), also
from the 962nd, fills a
water container with snow.



the middle of the night and had to urinate. Instead of leaving the warm shelter, he tried to go right there and ended up filling his boot by accident. It froze solid. He didn't think it was that funny at the time, as he had to break up the ice to remove it from his boot. But he was able to laugh about it later that day."

Blanchard said students get in trouble when they ignore or forget the rules.

"We teach students to avoid touching skin to metal while in freezing temperatures," Blanchard said. "But one captain was using a mini flashlight while he was trying to build a fire. He was having trouble holding the light while attempting to build the fire, so he held the light in his

mouth to free up his hands. But it was 35 below zero. He pulled most of the skin off his lips as he tried to rip the flashlight out before anyone else noticed."

Going through that pain proved all for naught. An instructor had been watching the captain the entire time.

"Most people don't experience temperatures like these," Blanchard said. "It's a shocking experience the first time that you do it."

Second Lt. Alexander Hathaway from the 7th Operations Support Squadron at Dyess AFB, Texas, can attest to that.

"I am from Southern California; I'm used to being in shorts and a T-shirt year round," Hathaway said. "So I was like,

'Damn, I'm going to freeze my butt off.' I thought my feet were going to get frostbite the first night. I've never been this cold in my life. But it's that whole will to survive thing — especially if you have family. So you're motivated to learn.

"I think one of the coolest things they taught us this week was if you sweat in the arctic, you die in the arctic. Ironically, you could be building a shelter to stay warm, but if you work up a sweat while doing it, you'll freeze anyway. So you have to pace yourself."

That's just one of the many lessons the instructors teach students. In the end, learning these survival skills make passing the Cool School "no sweat." ❄️



Sitting by a fire to keep warm, students also tend to the water bucket, which is a parachute filled with snow. It hangs near the fire so that the snow will melt and drip into a bucket for drinking water.



THE NO FUN RUN

Why do we continue to pound the pavement?

By Lt. Col. **ELLA SANJUME**
Photo by Staff Sgt. **MATTHEW HANNEN**

I hate running. Running makes every part of my body hurt — knees, lower back, lungs ... even my teeth.

I'll admit, I may be getting old and decrepit, but running hurt when I first joined the Air Force, too. So, why do I run?

First, the Air Force adopted the 1.5-mile run standard to test and measure our physical fitness.

Second, despite the discomfort, a regular running routine has tremendous physical and mental health benefits.

Finally, I've learned how to run in a manner that minimizes pain and maximizes performance.

In January 2004, the Air Force implemented a new physical fitness requirement that tested aerobic fitness, muscular strength and body composition. The 1.5-mile run replaced cycle ergometry as the cardiovascular test. I think that was a change for the better, or was I the only one who wondered how we'd pedal into battle?

As the Air Force moves to a leaner expeditionary force, our

return to running highlights the fitness level required in today's environment of more austere deployments and wartime locations. The run is a standard we must meet to indicate we're fit to perform our wartime mission.

We have rules on customs and courtesies, on uniforms and on physical fitness. I run for the same reason I salute and press my uniform — it's a military standard I've sworn to uphold.

I also run to support my dessert-eating capability — ask anyone in the chow hall who has tried to come between me and my three desserts. Running burns more calories per minute than any other form of cardiovascular exercise and is one of the best activities for burning fat.

With our busy schedules, running provides the most bang for the buck in terms of time, cardiovascular work, location and equipment. Running requires only good running shoes and 30 minutes to maintain cardiovascular fitness.



If you're having a bad day, running also relieves stress. Why worry about work when you can concentrate on your legs and lungs burning instead? Running clears the mind and is a great distraction.


Then, there's the famous "runner's high" when endorphins are released that mask pain and make running effortless. Personally, I think this is a myth that runners feed to non-runners as an inside joke. I'd like to see the "Mythbusters" take on that one.

I run as smartly as I can to minimize injuries. Although there are opposing camps on the benefits of stretching, I find it works if I warm up first and then stretch out. I run at a slow pace until my legs feel loose. Once done, I recommend stretching out slowly and holding the stretch while your muscles are warmed up.

As you get into better shape, set time or distance goals and try to run faster or further each session. Start preparing for your fitness test months in advance. If you want to run fast, you need

to practice running fast. Don't expect to pass the test after just one week of running. It probably won't happen, and it can even be dangerous to your health.

Put the same effort into your fitness test as you do for college or promotion testing. Being "fit to fight" is now part of the Air Force mindset.

While running may not be my favorite activity, I know it's beneficial, helping me to be physically fit and able to accomplish the Air Force mission. 

Colonel Sanjume is the 335th Training Squadron commander at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. (AETCNS)

FIVE TIPS TO AVOID RUNNING INJURIES

SHAW AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – Airmen must be physically fit to support the Air Force mission. With the inception of the Air Force fit-to-fight program, Airmen may be experiencing more knee, back and shoulder injuries.

These injuries are mainly caused by running and can be easily prevented, said Professor Timothy Noakes, author of "Lore of Running." Here's some of the ways you can prevent injuries when starting a running program.

1. A simple warm-up exercise such as a five-minute brisk walk, running in place or jumping jacks will allow the muscles to warm slowly, decreasing the chance of injury.

2. Stretching loosens the muscles slightly and takes pressure off the joints. It is important that the warm-up exercise be performed before stretching, because it does not help to stretch a cold muscle.

3. A cool-down exercise should take place after exercising as this lowers the intensity of the exercise and allows the heart to slow down and the muscles to relax. Afterwards, muscles need to be stretched once again.

4. You can minimize the wear and tear on your body by replacing up to 25 percent of running with biking, swimming, deep-water running, elliptical training or other aerobic non-weight bearing exercises.

5. Dehydration is not limited to the summer months, although it is more likely to occur during that time. Many physicians believe people who drink coffee, tea, soda and alcohol are at greater risk for dehydration. Those who consume these products should drink an equal amount of water. According to Noakes, by monitoring the color of your urine, you can tell if you are well hydrated. It should be pale yellow or even clear. Dark-colored urine can be an indication of dehydration.

— *Master Sgt. Darrell Mayers*
20th Medical Operations Squadron

Young loadmasters support war on terrorism while learning from more experienced mentors

Shouldering the Load

By Senior Airman **ERICK HOFMEYER**
Photo by Staff Sgt. **MATTHEW HANNEN**

A hefty responsibility rests on the shoulders of many junior expeditionary Airmen in the war on terrorism.

Daniel Stone, Brian Mulkey and Sheldon Cary, all loadmasters and airmen 1st class from the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, are among the many junior Airmen making a difference on a daily basis.

These newly certified loadmasters – not long out of their loadmaster technical school at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. — have been immersed in a world of precise weight and balance calculations throughout their first deployment rotation.





Reflecting on his most recent passengers, Senior Airman David Sanders, a C-130 Hercules aircrew loadmaster, closes a troop door after dropping off troops from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.



On a dirt strip in southern Ethiopia, loadmaster Airman 1st Class Bret Oyler directs Guam Army National Guardsman Spc. Rick Naputi towards the rear of a C-130 Hercules aircraft Dec. 26 for the removal of cargo.

The Airmen are paired with a seasoned loadmaster who serves as a “flying partner,” and stands by to pass on knowledge and experience. The team of two C-130 Hercules loadmasters work together to supervise the loading and unloading of aircraft, and to mathematically calculate the correct placement of the cargo and passenger loads to determine the aircraft’s center of gravity.

The pairing is necessary for new loadmasters to perfect all of the intricacies associated with airdrop operations, providing passenger comfort and safety, scanning for threats, performing preflight checks of the aircraft to ensure all equipment is working properly, and many other tasks.

Stone said one of the most challenging parts of his deployment is keeping up with the veteran loadmasters.

“The loadmaster I fly with pushes me to learn,” Stone said. “If there’s something that I don’t understand, he’ll make me think about it and see if I come up with the answer. And if I still don’t get it, he makes me look through the books so I understand how to do it next time.”

Tech. Sgt. Matt Rossi, a 746th EAS loadmaster, and Stone’s current flying partner, believes that for new loadmasters

to learn, they have to do the work themselves and not simply watch experienced loadmasters.

“I watch and allow him to perform the loading and off-loading procedures in a safe manner, without jeopardizing the mission and causing more work for himself,” Rossi said.

Sometimes the experienced loadmasters will allow the newcomers to make minor mistakes so they can learn from the mistake.

“One time early on in the rotation, I was about to bring in a K-loader, then I realized I didn’t put in the ramp support to keep the loading surface flat,” Mulkey said. “A ramp support has to be placed underneath the ramp if a pallet weighs (more than) 2,000 pounds. So I had to back it out, and then bring it back in. As bad as it sounds, making mistakes is a great way to learn. I’ll never do that again. It was a lot of time wasted.”

The junior Airmen had limited experience dealing with the needs of passengers prior to their first deployment. Working with an experienced loadmaster has helped them transport thousands of servicemembers in and out of the area of responsibility.

“We practiced briefing passengers on an aircraft with no wings in a hangar at our technical school,” Cary said. “Out here, the engines are running, there’s hot exhaust, and people are talking.”

In addition to passengers, the C-130 can accommodate a wide variety of oversized cargo, including everything from utility helicopters and six-wheeled armored vehicles to standard palletized cargo.

The 746th EAS aircrews currently on rotation have flown nearly 5,300 hours and transported 47,800 passengers and more than 3,000 tons of cargo since they began operations Oct. 6.

“Loading the different kinds of cargo that I’ve never seen before has been a challenge,” Stone said. “We’ve moved forklifts, Humvees and almost anything else that could fit.”

He received plenty of practice while loading and unloading a forklift to and from the back of the aircraft everywhere they went while flying humanitarian aid missions for flood refugees in Africa.

After all the growing pains, the three loadmasters unanimously agreed that getting into a “groove” with their aircrews and simply being up in the air are the best parts of their job.

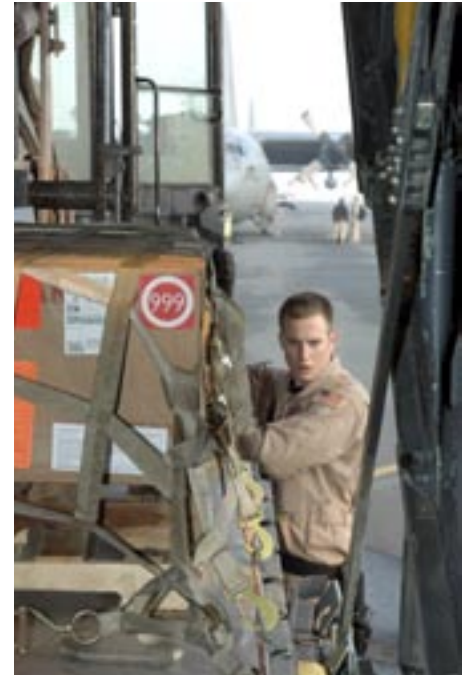
When the aircrews first arrived to the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, only few had flown together, and the aircrews were not quite used to each other. Certain missions at the beginning of the rotation took upward of 18 hours to complete, but the aircrews gradually shaved time off of the missions through familiarity and experience.

“At first, people tend to pass you up and go straight to the experienced loadmaster,” Mulkey said. “Midway through the rotation, things begin to start clicking. I earned people’s respect, and they began to ask me for my opinion.”✈️

Airman Hofmeyer is with the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs in Southwest Asia. (AFNEWS)



After loading a pallet of cargo in Southwest Asia, Mulkey and Master Sgt. James McElwee sign paperwork so the aircraft can proceed on its Southwest Asia mission.



Prepping an aircraft for a tactical airlift mission, Airman 1st Class Brian Mulkey, a loadmaster assigned to the 746th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, marshals in palletized cargo onto a C-130 Hercules in Southwest Asia.

From Classroom to Conflict

Staff Sgt. Michael Turner has been to every continent but Antarctica and has supported the war on terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan and all over the Middle East. And he’s only been a C-5 loadmaster for seven years.

“It doesn’t take long for a loadmaster to travel all over the world,” said Turner, an instructor with the Enlisted Aircrew Undergraduate Training Course, part of the Career Enlisted Aviator Center of Excellence at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. “We begin traveling even while we are in training.”

Airmen are qualified loadmasters coming out of loadmaster schools at Little Rock AFB, Ark. (for C-130s), and Altus AFB, Okla. (for C-5s and C-17s), said Master Sgt. Kelsey

Gunn, a 17-year veteran C-130E/H loadmaster and an instructor at the enlisted aircrew course. But it’s smart business to team them up with a more experienced loadmaster when in the field, he said.

“School can’t possibly cover every single scenario,” Gunn said. “But an experienced loadmaster has pretty much seen and done it all. So they can really guide the newcomers to ensure they do things right the first time and follow rules and checklists.”

Having these mentors is crucial to maintaining the safety of the aircrew, passengers and plane, Gunn said.

“An improperly tied down piece of equipment is dangerous,” he explained. “If the load comes lose and you have passengers on board, it can

severely injure or even kill somebody.”

He also said loadmasters have to be very aware of an aircraft’s weight limits.

“We fly out of a lot of short take-off fields, so you need to ensure the aircraft is within its limits and can take off when it’s supposed to on a short field,” Gunn said. “Otherwise you could end up in the side of a mountain.”

With students entering real-world missions quickly and some even traveling to nearly 50 countries in less than a year, the instructors are glad their education starts at the Career Enlisted Aviator Center of Excellence ... But they are equally as happy that their training doesn’t stop there.

— Tim Barela

A BASH TO BE REMEMBERED

EGLIN AIRCRAFT-WILDLIFE STRIKES DECREASE NEARLY 75 PERCENT

By Staff Sgt. **RYAN HANSEN**
Photo by Master Sgt. **MARK BUCHER**

While most Air Force bases around the world have a Bird and Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard, or BASH, program, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., officials have refocused and enhanced their efforts to more effectively deal with the diverse and rather large wildlife population.

Eglin's wildlife strikes dropped by almost 75 percent over the past year because of improvements to the BASH program.

The significance is tied to Bird Strike Committee USA statistics that indicate bird and other wildlife strikes to aircraft cause more than \$600 million in damage annually. In addition, more than 195 people have lost their lives to these strikes since 1988.

A little more than a year ago, Marty Daniel and Charles Kara, two U.S. Department of Agriculture wildlife biologists, joined the flight safety office at Eglin and started a comprehensive wildlife assessment. This survey has been a key in Eglin AFB's effort to curb bird strikes.

"The way we try to be proactive is we attack the source of the problem," Daniel said. "Instead of just going out and scaring the birds off the runway, we try to figure out why they're here in the first place."

While their survey is exhaustive, some of the changes they are implementing are easy to put in place and are turning out to be very effective. One change was to simply keep the grass located around the flight line mowed to around 10 to 12 inches in height versus 4 to 6 inches.

"Grass management is one easy management tool we came up with because we can manipulate the grass by either not mowing it, or mowing it to a certain height," Daniel said.

"Flocking birds like to be able to see each other when they land," Kara said. "So if they go in there and can't see each other, they won't stay around."

The team also has focused their efforts on filling in bare spots on the ground around the flight line as well as eliminating weeds and planting new grasses that do not attract birds.

"Bare spots attract birds too," Daniel said. "With a bare spot right next to a food source, that's an attraction for them, so we're working to eliminate those bare ground situations."

"We're also going to work to carefully apply some herbicides in certain areas to reduce the amount of weeds," Kara said. "(Weeds) are what really attract insects, and the insects attract birds."

During their assessment they also noticed a few small ponds around the flight line. The ponds formed because of an active beaver population creating dams.

"I know you don't really think about beavers and BASH, but they were impounding some water around the flight line, and water attracts birds," Daniel said. "So to get rid of the water, we have to get rid of the beavers."

The office continues to conduct surveys three times per week

Secrets to Their Success

- Employed two wildlife biologists to help with the BASH program.
- Let the grass around the flight line grow higher because flocking birds don't like grass that doesn't allow them to see each other.
- Used herbicides to decrease weeds. Weeds attract insects; insects attract birds.
- Removing beavers that created ponds near the flight line because water attracts birds.



at different times of the day to monitor the constantly changing wildlife habitat around Eglin AFB. There are 18 different survey sights around the airfield where they record what species are in that particular area.

“We use a software program that helps us monitor and watch for trends,” Kara said. “It uses temperature, humidity level and wind — really anything that accounts for those critters being there. Those trends will show us what we need to do to go in and mitigate the problem.”

The flight safety office also frequently calls upon other offices around Eglin to help push the BASH program over the top. They’ve used the expertise of personnel from airfield management, civil engineering as well as environmentalists at Jackson Guard.

“(Our) goal is to provide technical and field support to the BASH

program for the continued successful management of bird and wildlife species that threaten military and civilian aircraft,” said Dennis Teague, an endangered species biologist with the 96th Civil Engineer Group at Jackson Guard.

The flight safety office also plays a role in the base’s Bird Hazard Working Group. This team is a cooperative effort where different agencies around Eglin AFB come together to discuss items that can be done to lower the threat.

The bottom line through all of the programs is improved safety for military and civilian aircraft flying in and out of the Eglin AFB air space.

Sergeant Hansen is with the Air Armament Center Public Affairs Office at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. (AFPN)



***F-15 pilots and other aviators** can breathe a bit easier at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., as the base's flight line is nearly 75 percent safer than previous years because of improvements to its Bird and Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard, or BASH, program.*

***One of the changes** was to keep the grass height higher around the runways because birds are less likely to land somewhere if they can't see each other.*

U.S. Air Force photo

A WARNING FROM HISTORY

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. — “Warning — failure to comply may result in loss of life or severe damage to the aircraft.”

Warnings in the flight manual of Air Force aircraft mean exactly what they say. They cover operating procedures and practices that are known to cause death or injury. They do not, however, address every conceivable risk, especially when combat operations demand flexibility.

In the Pacific theater of World War II, 5th Air Force aircrews flew mostly maritime interdiction missions rather than the high-altitude strategic bombing mission they were trained to perform. During the first nine months of the war, the Army Air Force Airmen struggled to accomplish their unexpected maritime mission. It took an innovative leader, Gen. George C. Kenney, to improve the AAF’s performance. He directed his aircrew to mount forward-firing .50 caliber machine guns on bombers and encouraged tactical innovations such as skip-bombing and low-altitude attacks.

These new tactics helped mold 5th Air Force into an effective fight-

ing force, but it also brought additional risk. Attacking a ship from mast height proved a risky endeavor.

Fortunately, an active safety program helped highlight the dangers of unsafe practices and reduced the number of mishaps and combat losses significantly (see WWII safety poster).

Despite a slow start, the AAF performed its mission magnificently. The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, a post-war analysis of the effects of airpower, concluded, “The war against shipping was perhaps the most decisive single factor in the collapse of the Japanese economy and the logistic sup-

port of Japanese military and naval power.”

The AAF’s proud history of maritime interdiction in the Pacific serves as a reminder that an aggressive safety program is a critical component of victory.

— Maj. Lawrence Spinetta
Air University School of Advanced Air and Space Studies



Minimum Altitude Bombing: This historical poster from World War II graphically illustrates the mistake of following too closely on the preceding airplane and thus not allowing sufficient time for its bombs to explode.

courtesy of the Air Force Historical Research Agency

POCKETKNIFE STRIFE

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — As a former chief of safety, I was sitting at my desk reading mishap reports when I received a phone call advising that one of our C-5 aircrews was experiencing engine problems at a forward operating location.

The caller informed me that the crew, while attempting to takeoff, could not advance the Number 2 engine beyond idle power. The throttle would move, albeit not the full range, and would spring back to idle when released. How could it possibly be having engine problems? ... The plane had just recently gone through depot-level maintenance.

The crew aborted the takeoff and “handed over the keys” to maintenance personnel. The maintainers explored deeply into the throttle quadrant, but to no avail; they could not duplicate the problem. The crew attempted another takeoff and proceeded to a location further downrange.

They arrived, and the crew swiftly offloaded their precious cargo destined to support the global war on terrorism. They also on-loaded cargo for a third location. The crew took the runway for departure, smoothly advanced the throttles, and then Murphy struck ... the Number 2 engine failed to advance again.

This time, the aircrew members had exhausted their crew duty



time. Once again, they turned the airplane over to maintenance for a more thorough investigation. The maintenance team labored for several hours, removing panels inside the airplane and then outside.

Finally, an attentive crew chief found the culprit.

Nestled among the throttle cable pulleys at the top of the engine pylon was someone’s personal pocketknife. The knife moved freely, occasionally binding in the pulley.

This little knife, with its transitory binding, could have led to catastrophic results. Had the crew been airborne and another engine needed to be shutdown for whatever reason, the potential is great that this binding could have cost the Air Force a valuable crew and airplane.

The bottom line: Never use personal tools to repair aircraft, and ensure you do a thorough tool count following maintenance.

— Lt. Col. Paul (Mongo) Gloyd
37th Operations Support Squadron commander



U.S. Air Force photo

PILOT ERROR CAUSES PEDATOR CRASH

When the pilot inadvertently depressed the wrong switch, an MQ-1B Predator aircraft crashed, causing \$1,436,765 in damages.

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS) — Pilot error caused an MQ-1B Predator aircraft to crash during a training mission at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 3, according to an aircraft accident investigation report released in January.

There were no injuries or fatalities from the accident. Damage to the aircraft totaled

\$1,436,765. Other than damage to the aircraft, there was no other government property loss. The Predator was assigned to the 11th Reconnaissance Squadron at Creech.

The accident investigation board determined that the pilot, a civilian contractor, inadvertently depressed an incorrect switch while attempting to re-

tract the aircraft’s landing gear.

By pressing the incorrect switch, the pilot commanded the aircraft’s engine to shut off while the mishap aircraft was approximately 500 feet above ground level.

The pilot attempted to glide the aircraft back to the runway, but the aircraft crashed slightly off the runway.

F-15E Strike Eagle

"It is far more important to be able to hit the target than it is to haggle over who makes a weapon or who pulls a trigger."

— Dwight D. Eisenhower



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