



Air Education and Training Command's
TORCH
March/April 2006

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from senseless mishap
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Col. **FRANK A. PALUMBO JR.**
AETC Director of Safety

The Halfway Point

As unbelievable as it may seem, the end of April will mark the halfway point for fiscal 2006, and it means we are halfway through our annual safety campaign. The holidays brought some tragic suicides and dependent fatalities; however, we pretty much escaped losing anyone to major safety mishaps. Right around the corner the 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign is looming. Are you ready?

Our safety message is repetitive: "It's an individual's responsibility to make safety an integral part of life." The names and faces of the "individuals," from our commanders to our trainees, have changed, but our mission has not.

The safety success we have enjoyed in Air Education and Training Command has been in large part because our leaders at all levels stay engaged and drive the safety message home. The times when we've not been so suc-

cessful have most often involved lack of communication — someone not getting the word out about an event or a series of events which, had they communicated, could have prevented a mishap. Let's stay on the success track by communicating!

Recently we had the pleasure of hosting Air Force Chief of Safety Maj. Gen. Lee McFann Jr. for a short visit. We took advantage of his visit with an interview, which we have published in this issue of Torch (page 8). This issue also highlights motorcycle safety and seat belt awareness, as well as a warning to deployed troops on the dangers of stray animals and rabies.

Enjoy this issue. As always, we welcome articles or topics of interest you may have. Adios!

"The safety success we have enjoyed in Air Education and Training Command has been in large part because our leaders at all levels stay engaged and drive the safety message home."

Visit our Web site at:
www.aetc.randolph.af.mil/se2/torch

DON'T GIVE IN TO CRITIQUES

Please allow me to compliment you on your real-life oriented, practical articles. I noted that you have received more than one letter from readers concerned that your efforts to promote safety seem to make people afraid of almost everything (e.g., swimming in the gulf). The implication being that the message will be ignored since it promotes fatalism: "Since everything is bad for me, I may as well enjoy life doing what I want because I'm going to die anyway."

Please do not give in to (these critiques) by retreating from your aggressive attempts to develop a safety culture in your organization. In spite of statements like these, programs promoting safety work — and in more ways than one.

I have noted that those who do well in their career and are very professional are those who also know how to be prepared for emergencies. Invariably, the people

who could tell me where their water shut-off and fuel shut-off valves were in their home were those who were ready for anything at work (kit ready for a rapid deployment, know their protocols for independent duty, etc.) or at home.

Having a safety mindset develops a professional attitude. This is not surprising since it demands more work balancing resources and time against risk than just blindly pushing to get the job done. You learn to look at both sides of the risk-benefit equation without sacrificing safety or efficiency. It is a tough job, and it takes a professional to do it. Moreover, trying to do it develops professionalism.

Thank you for your contribution to the professionalism of organizations whose people read Torch magazine — including ours!

*Lt. Commander Ben Wahl
Goose Bay, Canada*



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.

RAISING THE BAR

We have really enjoyed Tech. Sgt. Jeff Allen's (photography and design) work over the years. He really set high standards in the Air Force photojournalism world.

*Master Sgt. Michael Burns
Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.*



by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

BACK FLIPS FOR POSTERS



I am the public affairs representative for the 361st Recruiting Squadron and have roughly 100 recruiters scattered throughout Oregon, Washington and Alaska, all of whom do back flips when I supply their offices with some of your posters. These are top quality products that help provide a great image for recruiters to present to school Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps units and other establishments, as well as to don on the walls of their offices. Thank you!

*Tech. Sgt. Chuck Marsh
McChord Air Force Base, Wash.*

THE ENVY OF ALL

We are recipients of Torch magazine and enjoy its articles very much. Also, our unit personnel (of the 1 Air Maintenance Squadron, 4 Wing Cold Lake) have been admirers of your calendars for a long time. The 1 AMS is a large unit, more than 300 personnel spread geographically over 15 different sites. The type of photography in your calendar is the envy of all.

*Sgt. T.P. Anthony
Cold Lake Air Base, Alberta, Canada*

I got the calendar order — thanks! They went like hotcakes.

*Pamela Timmermann
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas*

Thanks for the calendars! Everyone appreciated them.

*David A. Salisbury
Kelly U.S.A., Texas*

We just received the 2006 Air Education and Training Command Torch Calendars. They look fantastic! Thanks for the support!

*Tech. Sgt. Michael A. Kelley
Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.*

Your calendar, along with your magazine and information, is great.

*Marine Lance Cpl. D. Fixler
Castle Rock, Colo.*

Thank you for the 2006 Torch Calendars! We have many delighted readers to whom we have forwarded them. We have also selfishly kept a few to enjoy here in the office as well. Great job; keep up the good work!

*Paul Zasada
Watertown, Conn.*



'HELTER-SHELTER' SAYS IT ALL

Thank you to Lt. Col. Randy Coats who wrote the article "Helter-shelter" on Hurricane Katrina in the November/December 2005 issue of Torch (cover story, page 8). He put into words what so many of us went

through that week. I never could explain to my family what it was like to be in the shelter at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. It was a scary time.

That article was well circulated to my family and friends, and I am just thankful that Colonel Coats was able to say what I could not.

*Jessie Christensen
Via e-mail*

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

I recently was a guest at Vance Air Force Base, Okla. While there, I saw and picked up a copy of the 2006 Torch Calendar. They were so beautiful I had to place my own order for our post and the unit we support.

I am vice commander of Veterans of Foreign War Post 11411 in Florissant, Colo. Last year our post formally adopted a combat and reconstruction unit in Asadabad, Afghanistan. We provide all manner of support to this unit, which is a joint forces unit composed of Air Force, Army, Marines and Navy troops. In fact I was at Vance en route to Jenks, Okla., to attend the military funeral of the unit's first sergeant who had been killed in action on Dec. 28.

One of our support activities is to send packages to the troops we support. We will be including your beautiful calendars in the packages.

On behalf of our men and women who are so dedicated in serving their country, thank you so much for the calendars! The photos are spectacular, and I'm sure they will be appreciated.

*Duane Russell
Florissant, Colo.*



AIR FORCE IMPLEMENTS NEW CELL PHONE RESTRICTION

SAN ANTONIO (AFPN) — The Air Force is implementing a new cell phone restriction for drivers.

Beginning Feb. 27, drivers are not allowed to talk on their cell phones while driving on Air Force installations without a hands free device. This policy is part of the Department of Defense's Joint Traffic Guidance.

This restriction also applies to all government owned vehicles, or GOVs, at all times. No GOV drivers are permitted to talk on a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device on or off base.

"This is really a cooperative effort for everyone from the base populace to the base leaders," said Master Sgt. Gloria Ornelas, the superintendent of law enforcement for Air Force Security Forces. "I think it is long overdue. The DOD recognized that, and we are now in line with what some states and municipalities are doing to create a safer environment for drivers."

Joint Traffic Regulation, Air Force Instruction 31-218 (I), Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision, will restrict the use of cell phones while driving. Only cell phones with hands-free devices will be allowed for use by drivers. This guidance also allows the Air Force to use portable breath screening devices as long as they conform to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration standards.

The Defense Department's joint traffic document states:

"Vehicle operators on a DOD Installation and operators of Government owned vehicles shall not use cell phones unless the vehicle is safely parked or unless they are using a hands-free device.

"The wearing of any other portable headphones, earphones or other listening devices (except for hand-free cellular phones) while operating a motor vehicle is prohibited. Use of those devices impairs driving and masks or prevents recognition of emergency signals, alarms, announcements, the approach of vehicles, and human speech. DOD component safety guidance should note the potential for driver distractions such as eating and drinking, operating radios, CD players, global positioning equipment, etc. Whenever possible



photo illustration by Senior Airman Brian Ferguson

Without a hands-free device, drivers are no longer allowed to talk on their cell phones while driving on Air Force installations.

this should only be done when the vehicle is safely parked."

Using a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device will be considered a "primary offense." This means violators will be able to be stopped solely for this offense.

Drivers who violate this cell phone driving restriction will be given three assessment points against their driving records or an appropriate fine. Drivers should be aware that if two or more violations are committed, even on a single occasion, a ticket may be given to the driver for each violation.

"It was recognized at the DOD level that we needed some changes," Ornelas said. "The winner here is the base populace. They will have more mobility while driving, a greater range of view — in short, a safer driving environment for all."

— Staff Sgt. Matthew Rosine
Air Force Print News



by Kimberly Craze

Demonstrating proper wear of headphones while in PT gear, Senior Airman Lizeth Abreu stretches as she prepares for a workout.

HEADPHONES OK DURING WORKOUTS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. (AETCNS) — There are many reasons people opt to use headphones while working out. Some use them to pace themselves while running and doing reps. For others, getting lost in the music helps them work out longer by losing track of time.

Whatever the reason, headphones must be worn properly. According to Air Force of-

ficials, Airmen dressed in the new physical training uniform are authorized to wear headphones while participating in personal fitness and other off-duty activities.

However, headphones can't be worn in formation, during organized unit physical training sessions or while performing official duties.

Commanders may further

deny headphone wear if conditions are determined to be unsafe, such as people running near vehicle traffic where such wear would limit hearing or awareness of surroundings. They also may disallow headphone use because of operational requirements, officials said.

— Senior Airman Sarah Stegman
81st Training Wing Public Affairs



GIVE CHILDREN A 'BRAKE': SLOW DOWN IN BASE HOUSING

is why everyone who travels through base housing must make a conscious effort and be aware of their speed and their surroundings. Even just one speeder could threaten the life of a child.

So when do you consider yourself speeding? The average person may believe traveling 5 mph over the speed limit is not excessive, but

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AETCNS) — Like many first-time fathers-to-be, I find myself paying closer attention to traffic laws and regulations in anticipation of my precious new passenger. Yellow stoplights no longer mean “floor it,” and speeding and weaving in and out of lanes just to get to my destination a few seconds quicker isn’t worth it.

Having a baby really does change everything. But when do we forget that protecting our children is more important than getting to our destination quickly?

In the commute to and from work, I notice a lot of drivers exceeding the 15 mph posted speed limit in base housing. This timing unfortunately coincides with when most children are outside.

However, it isn’t a matter of when and if children are present. Drivers should abide by the speed limit no matter what time of day it is or who is in the area.

But it’s easy to exceed the low speed limit, I know. Even a slight tap of the gas pedal can accelerate a car by 15 mph. This

consider this: The average time it takes for a driver to remove his foot from the accelerator and depress the brake pedal is 1.5 seconds. This means that a car moving at 15 mph, or 22 feet per second, will travel 33 feet before the brakes are even applied, according to research conducted at the University of West Virginia.

Naturally, the faster a car is moving, the farther the car will travel before applying the brakes. If a child happens to jump out in front of a moving vehicle, the driver will need every spare second and inch to stop a safe distance from the child.

Despite all the consequences, speeding still occurs too often. The easiest and safest way to avoid seeing those blue and white lights in your rearview mirror is to slow down and follow the speed limit, especially in the housing areas.

Follow the speed limit. Save yourself some embarrassment. Save a life.

— 2nd Lt. Will Powell
325th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

LEARNING THE TOOLS TO MANAGE CHRONIC PAIN

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — Like many motivated Airmen, Staff Sgt. Robin Morrow, NCO in-charge of Point-of-Care Testing for the 859th Diagnostics and Therapeutics Squadron, is determined to make the most of her Air Force career.

Chronic back pain after an automobile accident and spinal surgery almost got in her way.

After the accident, her duties as a hospital lab technician had to be modified. She could no longer work out, let alone take the physical fitness test. Even normal activities after work, like going out with friends, became difficult. She thought she might have to separate from the Air Force because of her medical problems.

“The main thing was that pain overshadowed every decision I made,” she explained. “Pain ruled my life.”

Morrow received care at Wilford Hall Medical Center, the same hospital where she worked every day in San Antonio. She saw specialists and completed physical and occupational therapy programs. She visited the chiropractor and had surgery on her spine. Nothing made the pain go away.

She then was referred to Wilford Hall’s interdisciplinary pain treatment program, Functional Occupational Rehabilitation Treatment, in which medical, physical therapy, occupational therapy and psychological care providers joined together to determine a treatment plan.

“I was skeptical at first, because I felt like I had already tried everything,” she said. “But I thought the program was an interesting idea, and I was willing to give it a try.”

Morrow joined about 10 other military members in the six-week

FORT program. Participants all worked out together and went to classes on learning to manage their pain.

They also met individually with the rehabilitation providers to determine their treatment plan and progress. FORT care providers collaborated to administer intensive treatment, specifically tailored to Morrow’s condition, an advantage her previous therapy had not offered.

At 21, Morrow was the youngest person in her group of FORT participants; the oldest was about 45. All participants were active duty military members, but they represented all ranks, branches of service and types of injuries.

“It made a world of difference,” she said. “For someone who has never experienced chronic pain, it may be difficult to understand what a difference this program has made. It would have been so easy just to quit my job and lie on my parents’ couch. But for anyone who is in pain, this program is so worth it.”

Morrow is now qualified to be stationed or deployed anywhere in the world. Her life and career are no longer limited by pain.

— 1st Lt. Ellen Harr
59th Medical Wing Public Affairs



Exercising in the hospital gym, Staff Sgt. Robin Morrow overcame debilitating chronic back pain through the Functional Occupational Rehabilitation Treatment program at Wilford Hall Medical Center.

By 1st Lt. Ellen Harr

BURNING MOUSE

IGNITES HOUSE

The village fire captain said he's never seen a blaze as unique as this. A Fort Sumner, N.M., man said he caught a mouse inside his house and wanted to get rid of it. He had a pile of leaves burning outside, so he threw the mouse on it. The mouse caught fire and ran back into the house, said the 81-year-old man who talked about the event from a motel room. He claims the blaze the mouse started destroyed his home and everything inside it.



THE SEAT BELT NUISANCE

In September of his senior year at the University of Nebraska, a 21-year-old student wrote an impassioned declaration of independence from seat belts for his college newspaper. Although "intrusive and ridiculous" seat belt laws saved 6,100 lives a year, according to statistics from the U.S.

Congress. The student concluded with the statement, "If I want to be the jerk that flirts with death, I should be able to do that."

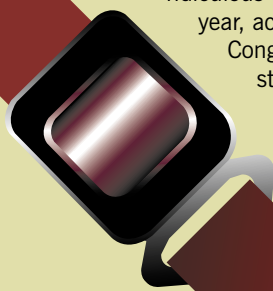
The student was known as a bright young man with a 4.0 grade point average.

He was majoring in five subjects and

planning to attend law school. He was also smart enough to tutor friends in subjects he didn't even take. But good grades don't equate to common sense.

The student was returning from a holiday in San Antonio. The driver of the Ford Explorer and his front seat passenger both wore seat belts. Only the rebellious student was willing to buck the system, sitting without a seat belt in the back seat. His reasoning? In the words of his newspaper column, he belonged to the "die-hard group of non-wearers out there who simply do not wish to buckle up, no matter what the government does."

When the SUV hit a patch of ice, slid off U.S. 80 and rolled several times, the student, in an involuntary display of his freedom, was thrown from the vehicle. He died at the scene. The other occupants of the SUV, slaves to the seat belt, survived with minor injuries. Alcohol was not involved in the accident.



A FULL MOON

Three Brazilian men were flying in a light aircraft at low altitude when another plane approached. It appears that they decided to moon the occupants of the other plane, but lost control of their own aircraft and crashed. They were all found dead in the wreckage with their pants around their ankles.



A NEW WEAPON?

CAFFEINE GUM HELPS TROOPS STAY ALERT

WASHINGTON — Caffeine gum now available to U.S. troops is intended to improve performance and alertness in myriad tasks, a wide-eyed and seemingly well-caffeinated sleep researcher at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington, D.C., said.

"We've tested the caffeine gum in a laboratory where we had a lot of control, and we tested it in field studies," Dr. Tom Balkin said as he incessantly chewed a piece of caffeine gum. "We found that it improves all sorts of performance and alertness tasks. And we didn't find any evidence that it had any detrimental effects."

Institute researchers concluded that the right amount of caffeine improves cognitive abilities, marksmanship, physical performance and overall vigilance, while preventing fatigue-related injuries and deaths.

The fruit of the research is a new product called "Stay Alert" caffeine chewing gum, which is now in production and available to U.S. armed forces and security agencies through military supply channels. Each pack of Stay Alert consists of five pieces of cinnamon-flavored gum, with each piece containing 100 milligrams of caffeine, equivalent to a 6-ounce cup of coffee.

"Our studies with caffeine have shown that at the right dose it's just as effective as some other stimulants that are more powerful, like amphetamines," Balkin said. "The advantage of caffeine is that it's widely available, doesn't require a prescription, and people have a lot of experience with it. So everybody already knows if they are sensitive to it or not."

Balkin said the caffeine gum has several advantages over other

caffeinated products. For instance, the gum is easy to transport and is readily accessible, and the caffeine in the gum is absorbed much quicker. Its affects also are felt much sooner.

"When you chew the gum, the caffeine is extruded into the saliva and is absorbed right through the tissues in the mouth into the bloodstream," Balkin said. "It gets into the brain very quickly, in about five minutes. It takes coffee about 20 to 25 minutes."

The researchers did several studies to determine the right amount of caffeine to administer. Their conclusion was that 200 milligrams of caffeine every two or three hours was the correct dosage for most people to maintain performance, he said.

Walter Reed got involved with the caffeine-gum project after an executive at Amurof Confections Co., a subsidiary of Wrigley's, asked if the Army would be interested in such a product. The answer was yes, and experts at the institute spent the next six years researching the gum.

"We spent six years in development, giving feedback to the company about dosages, etc.," Dr. Gary Kamimori, a behavior biology scientist at the institute, said. "Our research data regarding the affects of the gum was exciting, so we published the results."

When asked about possible safety hazards associated with misuse of the gum, Balkin said the bad taste of the gum would probably prevent its abuse.

"The stuff doesn't taste that good," Balkin said. "It doesn't taste as good as regular gum, so people are not going to be chewing it for the taste. I think most people will use it for what it's intended, and that's to help with alertness."

"There are other products that contain caffeine, like 'NoDoz,'" Dr. Debra Yourick, a Walter Reed public affairs officer, added. "I don't know the detrimental effects of their use, but it's not unusual for people to use caffeine."

The gum will not be issued with regular military rations, but "there is an experimental first-strike ration for the Special Forces," Balkin said. "One pack of gum is included in each special ration."

The Natick Soldier Center, which manages food and equipment research and development for the Army, also tested the gum and approved its use in the first-strike ration. The gum has been used in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.

— Steven Donald Smith
American Forces Press Service

Institute researchers concluded that the right amount of caffeine improves cognitive abilities, marksmanship, physical performance and overall vigilance, while preventing fatigue-related injuries and deaths.

"Stay Alert" caffeine chewing gum has been used in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.





Haunting

Tragic death motivates general to do whatever it takes to eliminate senseless mishaps

Corky had been in a car crash and was in a coma. The police report said he had been driving 85 mph in a 35 mph zone and lost control on a winding road.

After all these years, it still haunts him. Lee McFann replays the scene in his mind like he's done a thousand times before.

A lieutenant colonel and flying squadron commander at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., at the time, McFann prided himself on the fact that during his year and a half tenure there had been no major mishaps in his squadron of nearly 300 people ... no fatalities and no aircraft accidents.

Unfortunately, because of a base realignment, his squadron was closing. The last aircraft shipped out the previous day, and most of the troops had already been reassigned. Virtually his last act as the squadron commander was to attend the wing Christmas party that night and bid adieu to the last remaining members of his unit.

At 11 p.m. he and his wife said their last good-byes to the remaining squadron members, ensuring they were safe to drive home.

The next morning at about 5 a.m., McFann received a call that "Corky," a captain in his squadron, had been in a car crash and was in a coma. The police report said he had been driving 85 mph in a 35 mph zone and lost control on a winding road.

McFann had the unenviable task of breaking the tragic news to Corky's parents. Months later, Corky died.

Who Knew?

"The saddest part was that during the accident investigation, I found out that other members of the squadron knew that Corky liked to drive his sports car very fast down that road when going home; in fact, he bragged about it," McFann said. "I hadn't been aware of the driving risks he took, but I should have been. His peers knew, but didn't convince him to stop."

These are the kinds of tragedies that drive McFann, now a major general, in his dual role as the Air Force chief

of safety, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., and the commander, Air Force Safety Center, Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

The general said human factors – or human failures – account for nearly 80 percent of the Air Force's mishaps. He added that percentage-wise, enlisted males ages 18 to 25 experience the most fatalities in the Air Force.

"We need to protect our people," McFann said. "Sure that starts with the wing commander, group commander and squadron commander. But the leadership also has to come from that young captain or staff sergeant. They are the ones closer to the problem. And quite frankly, the wing commander is several years older and doesn't always speak the same language as the younger troops."

The top safety chief said the Air Force's greatest strength – success – is also its greatest weakness.



Images

By **TIM BARELA**



“Human factors – or human failures – account for nearly 80 percent of the Air Force’s mishaps. Percentage-wise, enlisted males ages 18 to 25 experience the most fatalities in the Air Force.”

— Maj. Gen. Lee McFann Jr.
Air Force chief of safety

Making Mistakes

“We have an enviable flight safety record and a ground safety rate that is the best in the Department of Defense,” McFann said. “But because of that success, we become complacent. For example, we fly demanding missions, but we’ve done it so often and done it so well that it’s routine.

“When things become routine, you start to get complacent. When you become complacent, that’s when you make mistakes. And when you make mistakes? ... That’s when someone gets hurt.”

The Big Hurt

And when it comes to getting hurt, nowhere is that more prevalent than in private motor vehicles.

“A lot of people don’t realize that the Air Force loses more people to private motor vehicle accidents than any other single source,” the general said. “We definitely need to improve in this area.”

McFann says that part of the reason the Air Force and other services have a problem with vehicle mishaps is because of inexperienced drivers.

“We get a lot of young people in the Air Force,” the general said. “Fourteen percent of the new Airmen coming in don’t have their drivers’ licenses. A lot of those who do have them can’t even drive a stick shift.”

Taking the Lead

McFann said Air Education and Training Command is leading the way in improving the skills of these young drivers through driving programs in both basic training and technical schools.

Nonetheless Airmen continue to die behind the wheel. While there are many actions that could curb this trend, McFann said two of the easiest are simply wearing seat belts in four-wheeled vehicles and donning helmets when riding motorcycles.

A No-Brainer

“Not wearing a seat belt or a motorcycle helmet? ... I don’t get it,” he said. “It takes little to no effort to put them on, when the return – saving your life – is so high. Besides, not wearing seat belts is against the law.”

For military members,

the helmet issue also should be a no-brainer. That’s because no matter what the individual state laws are, wearing a helmet when riding a motorcycle is required by regulation, McFann said.

There are a few states that don’t require helmets. Florida was one of those that had a helmet law, repealed it, and then saw its head injury cases (for motorcycle accidents without a helmet) go off the charts, the general said. Florida is now modifying its helmet laws, he added.

Too Steep a Price

Breaking seat belt laws and motorcycle helmet regulations can have a high price. Not only can members be seriously or even fatally injured, but they could be found “not in the line of duty,” the general said. In those cases, the financial impact on the family left behind could be devastating.

“A ‘not in the line of duty determination’ could result in a young child of the deceased parent losing a half million dollars in benefits because mom or dad didn’t follow the rules,” McFann said.

Making Headway

Not all is gloom and doom, though. Since the secretary of defense challenged all services to reduce mishaps by 50 percent from 2002 to 2005, private motor vehicle accidents in the Air Force have decreased by 45 percent, the general said.

“Did we achieve a 50 percent reduction? No,” he said. “We fell short of that mark in most cases, but that’s not to say that the program was a failure. We did make great strides in a lot of areas and improved in virtually every measurable safety category. So, in that sense, the program was a huge success.”

Next Up?

The next goal – reducing mishaps by 75 percent by 2008 – will be even tougher. But McFann doesn’t shy from the challenge.

“If you compare Air Force mishaps to society at large, our rates are much better,” he said.

But is that good enough? “No,” he said. “Losing one person is too many.”



**BEFORE
THEIR
TIME**

How two people ended up
in a nursing home by age 30

By **LARRY STULZ**
Photo Illustration by **DAVID STACK**

He stood out like a red fire engine on a snowy highway. Clad in a black muscle shirt, some pretty intimidating tattoos covered the exposed flesh from his shoulders to his hands. Every one of his fingers bore a huge ring — one wielded a skull and crossbones, others depicted weapons such as knives and guns. I had him pegged for a Hell’s Angel-type. I could envision him in a knife fight or getting thrown out of a saloon or two.

Yes, this 30-year-old must have been a “bad-ass” dude, so why was he living with people more than twice his age in a nursing home?

My wife and I glanced at each other with the same uneasy question in our minds. We often visited nursing homes and hospitals because we own two English Cocker Spaniels that are registered therapy dogs. They help brighten the day of those who need all the love and attention that they can get, especially the elderly. But we hadn’t expected this. What was this young “hell-raiser” doing here?

Because of all the outward social indicators, I normally would never think to approach a guy like this. However, a woman who was with him motioned for us to come over. She introduced us to her husband Ron. Ron, who had been eating a hamburger and fries, said something, but I wasn’t able to decipher it through his badly slurred speech.

As Ron petted our dogs, his wife explained that he had been in a tragic motorcycle accident five months ago and had suffered a severe brain injury. Doctors didn’t think he would survive. He pulled through the operation, but the resulting brain damage forced him into fulltime care at a nursing home.

Since I am the safety manager at work, I felt there was probably more to this story. I thought quickly about how I could learn more about the mishap without seeming too forward.

“Did the motorcycle helmet malfunction during the crash,” I asked?

“He wasn’t wearing one,” she replied.

I am sure most bikers with his persona do not wear motorcycle helmets or bright orange vests while riding. Unfortunately, even many clean-cut Airmen choose not to wear this life-saving gear. In Ron’s case, his outside appearance is still fitting of a Hell’s Angel, but the mechanics in



By Steve White

“This 30-year-old must have been a ‘bad-ass’ dude, so why was he living with people more than twice his age in a nursing home?”

his brain have been altered, which affects every other aspect of his life.

Ron’s situation made me think long and hard about the unexpected things in life that can happen in an instant but change your universe forever.

No sooner was I pondering these thoughts, when we were directed to a

30-something lady with a shaved head. She rocked back and forth in her wheelchair but had a smile that would brighten anyone’s day. Since her body curled into a partial fetal position, I gently placed one of the dogs on her lap. Her face lit up with excitement, and she tried her best to laugh.

I was concerned that the dogs may be too lively for her as I noticed a fresh surgical incision with staples that ran from one ear across her head to the other ear. My wife, who is also a nurse, took over and made sure that the dogs were not hurting her.

I stepped back and talked to one of the nursing assistants and asked about the lady’s condition. I learned that the young woman in the wheelchair was a typical soccer mom several months ago. She had been in a vehicle mishap and suffered a debilitating brain injury. She hadn’t been wearing a seat belt. She will likely not recover. I also learned that her two young children and husband were in earlier that day to visit, but she does not recognize her family members.

I had a hard time concentrating for the rest of the day as my thoughts often went back to those two people. I thought of the lifestyles that they led and their families that are now suffering and recovering as much as they are. Thinking of their unfortunate examples, it is frightening to realize how fast one’s whole world can change in an instant.

In our society, it seems that those who are injured or have long recovery periods tend to disappear from life’s normal day-to-day activities and thoughts. We may forget about those individuals or not learn from their experiences. Hopefully, you won’t forget about two lives changed in an instant by not taking the second in time to make a choice that would have made a world of difference. ✨

Mr. Stulz is with the 445th Airlift Wing Safety Office at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

More Troops Dying on Motorcycles

It’s a cruel irony, but many troops are surviving deployments to combat zones abroad only to return home and die on motorcycles.

Since 9/11, more American troops have died in off-duty motorcycle accidents than fighting in Afghanistan. Nearly 350 troops have died on bikes since the 2001 terrorist attacks compared with 259 killed while serving in Afghanistan, according to safety records kept by each service.

The number who die in crashes each year — nearly all in the United States — has more than doubled since 2001, hitting new levels in 2005.

A big part of the problem, according to commanders, comes when troops return from war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan with months of tax-free salaries and extra pay for combat and overseas service. They buy high-powered motorcycles and hit the streets to burn off adrenaline, testosterone and boredom.





A Rabies Menace?

Deployed Airmen must defend against stray animals

By Tech. Sgt. **KEN SLOAT**

Photo by Senior Airman **STEPHEN J. OTERO**

Rabies Virus

Against the backdrop of a rising sun, a small group of Airmen stealthily make their way forward in search of the enemy.

Their mission is safe-

guarding the Airmen, Soldiers and Department of Defense contractors assigned to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, from some dangerous intruders: stray animals.



For a team of pest management technicians from the 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineers Squadron, traps and deterrence are a daily task as they try to reduce the amount of stray animals roaming freely at Kirkuk.

The stray animal population does present a deadly threat to humans because they may have rabies, said Tech. Sgt. Stacy Wallett, a pest management technician deployed from McConnell Air Force Base, Kan.

Many deployed Airmen and Soldiers may not automatically understand the full danger of rabies because it is almost unknown in domestic animal populations in North America, he said.

According to figures provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of rabies-related human deaths in the United States have dropped from more than 100 at the turn of the century to just one or two annually. More than 90 percent of reported cases each year occur in wildlife rather than domestic animals.

That isn't the case at Kirkuk.

Within the last month, a dog captured on the base tested positive for the rabies virus, said Army Capt. (Dr.) Kristie Souders, officer in charge of the 72nd Medical Detachment veterinary clinic. She's deployed from Giebelstadt, Germany.

"The big thing people should keep in mind is that [Kirkuk residents] don't keep dogs as pets," she said.

She said it isn't likely any of the dogs or cats found at Kirkuk are really domesticated, at least not the way most people think of domestication.

One Arab cultural specialist agrees.

Capt. Matthew Ence, a foreign affairs officer for 9th Air Force at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., said in many Arab countries dogs and cats are seen as little more than pests. He said it would be rare for a middle income Arab family to keep one as a pet inside their home.

The CDC reports that worldwide, exposure to rabid dogs is still the cause of more than 90 percent of human exposure to rabies and causes more than 99 percent of the human deaths annually.

In the case of the rabid dog caught at Kirkuk, Souders said, it "acted like it wanted to be played with, then it turned on them."

"I don't care how cuddly it's been. It could change and be totally different," she said.

Souders said they only submit animals for testing if the animal has caused a problem, such as the case of the antagonistic dog that turned up positive with rabies.

Rabies is a preventable disease that affects the central nervous system. Once it enters the body through a bite or other wound, it begins to navigate its way to the brain. During the period when the virus is traveling to the brain, referred to as the incubation period, the animal may seem normal.

"Once it affects their brain, it will change," she said. "You can't predict how they are going to act."

The symptoms that most people associate with rabies — the aggressive behavior and increased salivation, or foaming at the mouth — begin once the brain becomes infected. Once it reaches



by Tech. Sgt. Ken Sloat

With rabies being found in the animal population at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, Tech. Sgt. Stacy Walleth secures a cage containing a trapped dog. Pest management technicians say it's important to remove stray animals that could endanger servicemembers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

the brain the disease is always fatal. There is no treatment available after symptoms appear, for neither animal nor human.

"If you get bit, and then don't report it and then get rabies, you will die," said Maj. (Dr.) John Harrah, director of emergency services for the 506th Expeditionary Medical Squadron. He's deployed from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

The squadron's medical director, Lt. Col. (Dr.) James Freese, also from Eglin, said, "We don't treat simple exposure unless we know the animal is rabid."

However, he said, if the animal is rabid, doctors will treat everyone exposed, regardless of the extent of their exposure.

The post exposure treatment for rabies is a series of five shots, beginning immediately after exposure and continuing at planned intervals with the last one being at 28 days.

The success of the post exposure treatment is very high. According to the CDC "there have been no vaccine failures in the United States" when post exposure treatment was given quickly and correctly.

In addition to the threat of death or a painful treatment regimen, military justice is another reason to avoid stray animal contact.

At Kirkuk, General Order 1A, which applies to all assigned military, specifically prohibits "adopting as pets or mascots, caring for or feeding any type of domestic or wild animal."

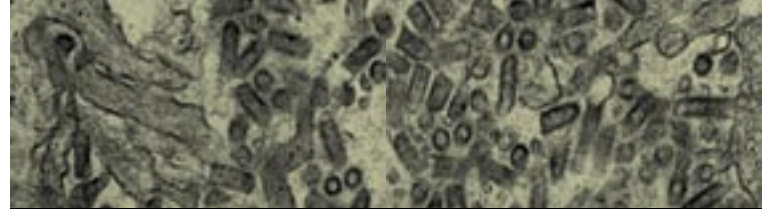
And yet, the risky and illegal behavior continues.

"We found a place where someone appeared to have set up a feeding station for the local canine population," said Tech. Sgt. Bruce Gazaway, a pest management technician deployed from Kulis Air National Guard Base, Alaska.

The sergeant said the "well-intentioned Good Samaritan" actually endangered everyone around him or her by attracting stray dogs to the area.

"They just aren't thinking," he said. 🐕

Sergeant Sloat is with the 506th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs at Kirkuk AB, Iraq. (AFPJ)



Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of rabies typically appear about four days after the bite occurs. But in rare cases, symptoms don't show up for more than a year.

One of the most distinctive signs of a rabies infection is a tingling or twitching sensation around the area of the animal bite. It is often accompanied by a fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, nausea and fatigue.

As the infection progresses, someone infected with rabies may develop any of the following symptoms:

- 👁️ Irritability
- 👁️ Excessive movements or agitation
- 🧠 Confusion
- 👁️ Hallucinations
- 👁️ Aggressiveness
- 👁️ Bizarre or abnormal thoughts
- 👁️ Muscle spasms
- 👁️ Abnormal postures
- 👁️ Seizures (convulsions)
- 👁️ Weakness or paralysis
- 👁️ Extreme sensitivity to bright lights, sounds or touch
- 👁️ Increased production of saliva or tears
- 👁️ Difficulty speaking

If bitten ... go immediately to a nearby emergency department.



The T-38 crashed after the pilots ejected. The cause of the accident is still under investigation.

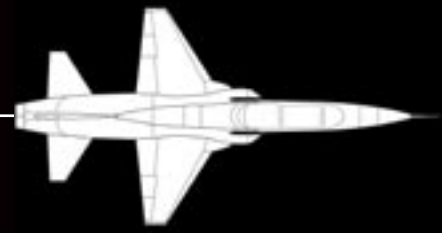


Surviving an Ejection

President visits
injured T-38 pilot

By Capt. **KEN HALL**





“From the ejection seats and chutes working properly, to fire and search and rescue, command and control, medical response, safety, maintenance — all the pieces of the puzzle worked because of training.”

President George W. Bush spent New Year’s Day visiting wounded and injured servicemembers at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, among them Maj. Marc Montgomery, a Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, instructor pilot injured when his T-38C crashed in December.

Montgomery and his wife Kathleen enjoyed the rare encounter with the commander-in-chief as Montgomery continued to recover from his wounds. The T-38C Talon pilot sustained serious injuries when he and his student ejected from their aircraft Dec. 13.

An instructor pilot with the 96th Flying Training Squadron, Montgomery had been hospitalized in San Antonio in the weeks after the mishap.

“He’s in good spirits and actually up and around on his crutches,” said Lt. Col. George Fenimore, 96th FTS squadron commander. “BAMC is the best facility of its kind in the entire world, and we’re fortunate to be so close.”

After his release from the hospital, Montgomery continued recuperating at home in Del Rio, Texas.

“He’s expected to recover in a number of months and fly again,” Fenimore said.

Montgomery’s aircraft crashed after apparently being struck by a bird as he and student pilot 2nd Lt. Jonathan Ballard of the 87th Flying Training Squadron flew a routine low-level mission east of Brackettville, Texas.

It had been more than two years since the last major aircraft mishap at Laughlin.

“We’ve had a crash; two good ‘chutes’ seen,” squawked radios at Laughlin in the late afternoon the day of the mishap. Responders hurried to

action at Laughlin and Spofford Airfield after hearing the T-38C had gone down. A massive effort was coordinated among several base agencies and off-base emergency responders.

“From start to finish, everything worked the way it was supposed to,” said Col. Tod Wolters, 47th Flying Training Wing commander. “For all the factors that had to

converge to keep our two Airmen alive — this was certainly the result of our folks’ extensive training and a lot of hard work.”

Wolters said the wing mobilized well to respond to this accident.

“From the ejection seats and chutes working properly, to fire and search and rescue, command and control, medical response, safety, maintenance — all the pieces of the puzzle worked because of training” Wolters said.

As the mishap unfolded, Montgomery had more on his mind than his own safety.

“Throughout the final seconds of flight, Major Montgomery’s primary concern was for the safety of his student pilot,” Fenimore said.

Montgomery was airlifted to BAMC. Ballard was transported back to Laughlin where he was evaluated at the 47th Medical Group clinic and released.

“Our response to this mishap underscored the value of training and its role ... not only in our Airmen’s survival, but in the outstanding response efforts that followed,” said Maj. Brad Rice, acting chief of wing safety.

The loss of the T-38C is classified as a Class A mishap (one exceeding \$1 million in damages). It requires both safety board and accident board investigations. ✈

Captain Hall is with the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs at Laughlin AFB, Texas. (AETCNS)

by Shealah Craighead



President George W. Bush visits with Maj. Marc Montgomery, 96th Flying Training Squadron, Laughlin AFB, Texas, and his wife Kathleen Jan. 1 at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. Montgomery, an instructor pilot, was injured in a T-38C crash Dec. 13.



When

A-10 'Warthog' pilot 'talks



'Pigs' Fly

By Senior Airman AMAANI LYLE
Photo by Senior Airman GREG L. DAVIS

down' civilian airplane with emergency





“I didn’t even see the A-10 coming. His plane just appeared under mine like a rocket climbing. It was definitely something like you’d see in the movies!”

— Naim Fazlija

Kosovo pilot on being saved by an Air Force A-10 pilot

“Mayday! Mayday!”

This distress call is familiar to most people who watch television and movies. But when it is made for real, it can make a pilot’s mouth go dry and his stomach cramp.

That is the feeling pilot Naim Fazlija said he had when he made the distress call to German radar controllers when his Piper Chieftain twin-engine lost its electrical system on a flight from the Netherlands to Geneva in November.

The civilian charter plane was flying at 11,000 feet over a hazy Germany.

Fazlija said he and co-pilot Artan Berisha remained calm so as not to alarm their five passengers.

“This was the first time in my 10 years of flying that I had to make a distress call like this,” the pilot from Kosovo said. “I was like a bird without eyes. There was absolutely no power in the plane except for a hand-held radio and a small global positioning system.”

Knowing he could not risk flying in such low visibility the remaining 200 miles to Geneva, Fazlija needed help — immediately.

At the same time, Maj. Pete Olson was flying his A-10 Thunderbolt II, a.k.a the “Warthog,” back to Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, after a training mission with three other aircraft. The 81st Fighter Squadron pilot received the distressed aircraft signal from a German ground radar controller.

“I was a little worried when I got the call, but I knew I had to act fast,” said Olson, who is also the 52nd Operations Support Squadron chief of A-10 wing weapons and tactics.

The major cleared his team to return to base and put his 12 years of training to work. Within minutes, he was in airspace over Baumholder, Germany, and tried to contact the civilian aircraft on the radar controller’s search and rescue frequency.

“Follow me,” Olson told Fazlija over his crackling radio.

But Fazlija continued flying a triangular route because he could barely hear the major’s instructions and could not even track his own speed.



by Senior Airman Amaani Lyle

Hero for the day Maj. Pete Olson guided a civilian pilot, as well as his crew and passengers, to safety after their aircraft experienced an in-flight emergency. The Spangdahlem AB, Germany, A-10 pilot said his philosophy of training and rescue is simple: “You never turn your back, but do all you can within reason to help.”

Hope — like Fazlija’s ability to see from the plane — seemed to dwindle until he spotted something.

“I didn’t even see the A-10 coming,” Fazlija said. “His plane just appeared under mine like a rocket climbing. It was definitely something like you’d see in the movies!”

In true wingman fashion, Olson flew his jet around the Chief-tain. He stayed in formation, at times from 10 to 20 feet, to as far away as 3,000 feet.

Fazlija said the major’s maneuvering signs were a critical factor in leading his plane under the weather to a safe landing at Hahn Airport 15 minutes later.

Fazlija said the 15 minutes seemed to elapse in the blink of an eye. But it still allowed him ample time to ponder his mortality and that of his passengers.

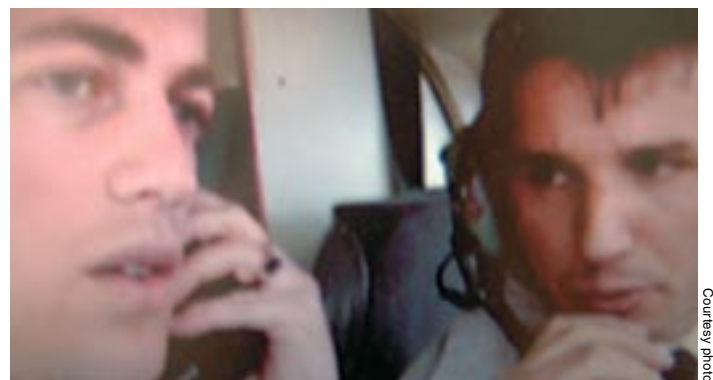
“I didn’t care that I might die,” he said. “I could only think that the lives of my co-pilot, passengers — and possibly people on the ground — could be cut short by my actions.”

Olson’s supervisor said the feat comes as no surprise to him.

“Certainly the outstanding airmanship and skill displayed is what I’d expect from Pete every time he flies,” said Lt. Col. John Cherrey, the fighter squadron commander. “This shows the type of decisive decision making we get from our daily combat training.”

Fazlija said the brush with disaster has only bolstered his love of flying and his gratitude to his unexpected wingman.

“I truly appreciate Major Olson and the entire U.S. Air Force,”



Courtesy photo

After their plane’s electrical system failed, civilian pilots Artan Berisha (left) and Naim Fazlija make a distress call to a German radar controller. The Piper Chieftain charter aircraft, as well as its passengers and crew, survived the emergency after an Air Force A-10 pilot guided them to safety.

Fazlija said. “His professionalism led us to safety. I knew we were in good hands.”✈

Airman Lyle is with the 52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office at Spangdahlem AB, Germany. (AFPN)

RAPTOR

RAPTURES

OPERATIONAL F-22As FIRE AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES

By 2nd Lt. **WILL POWELL**
Photo by Master Sgt. **MIKE AMMONS**

For the second time in less than four months, the 27th Fighter Squadron made history when two F-22A Raptor pilots fired air-to-air missiles Feb. 14 during the jet's first official air-to-air weapons system evaluation since becoming operational two months ago.

Nearly 40 Airmen from the Langley Air

Force Base, Va., squadron participated in the Air Force's air-to-air weapon system evaluation program, known as Combat Archer, at the 83rd Fighter Weapons Squadron at Tyndall AFB, Fla.

"It's not every day that you can go out and shoot a live missile," said Lt. Col. Raymond O'Mara, 83rd FWS commander. "WSEP is a great training opportunity for pilots to see how the whole system works, and it instills confidence that the weapon system is going to work when they need it."

Air Force fighter pilots fire more than 300 missiles each year over the Gulf Range to evaluate the total air-to-air weapons system including aircraft, weapon delivery system, weapon, aircrew, support equipment, technical data and maintenance actions.

"Our basic charter is to make sure our Airmen are effective on their first combat mission and every combat mission thereafter," said Col. Mike Winslow, 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group commander. "That's the whole reason this program exists."



The Raptor has been tested many times before, but this time was different, O'Mara said.

"The Raptor has gone through a long period of development tests and operation tests where they've established what the airplane is capable of," he said. "But this is the first time we've had operational pilots flying declared operational aircraft with fielded operational weapons and actually employing them the way we would in combat."

WSEP deployments normally last two weeks, but the Langley Raptors were at Tyndall for only a one-day evaluation to prepare for an upcoming, full-scale deployment in the summer.

"Today was just an investigative shot," said Lt. Col. Jim Hecker, 27th FS commander, who shot the first missile, an AIM-120 advanced medium-range air-to-air missile. "Since we carry our weapons internally, we were checking to see if the missile telemetry can be picked up outside of the

aircraft." Being able to read the missile's telemetry is important. It's the only way the 83rd FWS can evaluate how well a weapon works.

The pilots planned to shoot sub-scale drones with only four missiles – two AIM-120s and two AIM-9 Sidewinders – to discover and fix any internal carriage problems before the squadron returns this summer. Unfortunately, a fuel pump problem forced one jet to remain on the ground, and another Raptor ran out of safe airspace before being able to fire.

Even though only two missiles were fired, the day was still a success, O'Mara said.

"We were able to read the missile's telemetry in flight, and both missile shots were successful," he said. "I would have preferred to have all four fired, but this is a good start that will provide plenty of work and data for us to look at."

The day was also significant because no operational Raptor pilot had ever fired

a missile from a Raptor before, and some pilots have never fired a missile from any aircraft before, Hecker said.

"It's great to practice dropping bombs and shooting missiles in a simulator, but actually having a weapon leave the jet just solidifies all your training and what you're learning," said Capt. Chris Batterton, who fired the AIM-9. "It was awesome to see the missile shoot off from the side of the jet like a bottle rocket and then smack the drone. It was a very successful shot."

O'Mara said he looks forward to adding the Raptor to the WSEP's regular lineup of participants, which currently includes every single air-to-air aircraft in the Air Force's inventory.

"I expect the Raptor to become an integral part of WSEP, and I'm looking forward to the full-up deployment this summer," he said.

Lieutenant Powell is with the 325th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office at Tyndall AFB, Fla. (AETCNS)



During a Combat Archer mission, Lt. Col. Jim Hecker fires an AIM-120 advanced medium-range air-to-air missile at a sub-scale aerial target drone Feb. 14 over the Gulf of Mexico.

MILESTONES WITH MISSILES

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS)
— Two weeks in Florida led to two more historic steps for Langley ... but if this sounds like just another Raptor story, keep reading.

Twelve F-15 Eagles from the 71st Fighter Squadron and four F-22A Raptors from the 27th FS were flown to Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Feb. 4 through 17 to tackle various missile tests at Combat Archer, the Air Force's live-fire, air-to-air evaluation program.

Though recently they have played second-fiddle to the excitement surrounding the up-and-coming F-22A, the Eagle pilots left the biggest mark on this round of training by firing one of the longest kills ever recorded in Weapons Systems Evaluation Program history.

Capt. Charles Glasscock, 71st FS pilot, set the record while firing the new AIM-9X Sidewinder missile during a test specifically designed to assess the missile's maximum range.

"They really didn't think it could go that far, and I think it surprised everyone, especially the drone operators," Glasscock said with a laugh. "But it was definitely an awesome feeling watching the missile impact the target."

— 1st Lt. Elizabeth Kreft
1st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

T-1A REACHES 1 MILLION HOUR MARK

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — Air Education and Training Command's T-1A Jayhawk pilot training aircraft flew its millionth safe flying hour Oct. 27.

The aircraft reached this milestone with no fatalities, significant safety issues or major injuries, said Lt. Col. Victor Rick, AETC Initial Training Branch chief.

AETC is unable to credit a specific pilot or aircraft with the accomplishment because approximately 68 T-1A Jayhawks were

simultaneously airborne across the United States when the 1 million hour mark was crossed, according to statistics provided by Bob Laymon, Raytheon Corporation Air Force programs manager.

The T-1A is used in the advanced phase of specialized undergraduate pilot training for students selected to fly airlift or tanker aircraft. It is also used for navigator training support by Air Force,



by Fernando Serna

The T-1A Jayhawk reached a major milestone with 1 million safe flying hours with no fatalities, significant safety issues or major injuries.

Navy, Marine Corps and international services.

The Air Force purchased Raytheon Corporation's Beech 400A civilian aircraft and began using it for training in 1993. Powered by twin turbofan engines, the Jayhawk is capable of an operating speed of Mach .78, or 538 mph, and has a ceiling of 41,000 feet.

Since the Beech 400A was flown for a few years prior to the Air Force's purchase of the aircraft, most of the

bugs had been worked out, said Maj. John Ryon, AETC chief of safety operations.

The T-1A's "tried and true" airframe and its similarities to a civilian aircraft have contributed to its record, Ryon said.

— Megan Orton

Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

SEVERE CLEAR AIR TURBULENCE CAUSES KC-135 EMERGENCY LANDING, INJURIES

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. (AMCNS) — Air Mobility Command has released the results of its investigation into the May 15 mishap involving a KC-135R aircraft assigned to the 128th Air Refueling Wing, Milwaukee, Wis.

An accident investigation board, convened by AMC, concluded the cause of the accident was unforeseen, unforecasted and unavoidable severe clear air turbulence.

Two passengers were seriously injured when the aircraft encountered turbulence at 37,000 feet, then dropped 400 feet. Several other passengers and crew members also sustained minor injuries. The aircraft made an emergency landing at Turks and

File photo



Two passenger were seriously injured when a KC-135 encountered turbulence at 37,000 feet, then dropped 400 feet.

Caicos Islands, where the crew obtained immediate medical treatment for the injured. The aircraft was flying members of the Virgin Islands Army National Guard.

AIR FORCE INTRODUCES **NEW HELICOPTER** FOR PILOT TRAINING

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — The Air Force rolled out the TH-1H helicopter at the home of pilot instructor training and Headquarters Air Education and Training Command on Nov. 5 in conjunction with the base's 75th Anniversary and 2005 Air Show.

The TH-1H, the latest version of the UH-1H Huey, has undergone an extensive refurbishment that includes upgraded components and a new avionics suite with a glass cockpit. Whereas the old helicopters were equipped with traditional round dial gauges for altitude, speed, etc., the glass cockpit takes the same information and displays the information digitally on a single monitor. Four of the original round dial gauges, however, remain in case there is a total failure of the new system.

According to Brig. Gen. Richard E. Perraut, AETC Plans and Programs director, "The TH-1H's advanced electronics provide expanded training opportunities and improved operational capabilities by upgrading the engine, transmission and rotor system. It has the latest multi-function displays allowing for future

upgrades and providing new aircrews with a seamless transition from the T-6 to a follow-on rotary wing aircraft such as the CV-22, Combat Search and Rescue-X and Common Vertical Lift Support Platform helicopters."

The TH-1H is the newest of more than 15 variants of the original Huey first flown in 1956. By 2009 the Air Force is scheduled to have 24 TH-1H's in the inventory which will sustain Air Force helicopter pilot training until 2025.

"The first TH-1H is undergoing testing and evaluation," Perraut said. "We are projected to receive our first production aircraft in April 2007 with small group tryouts to follow. Small group tryouts will allow the instructors to develop and analyze the curriculum that will be used to train helicopter pilots on the new aircraft.

This is the first step to providing the platform and syllabus for the new students with the first class scheduled in the summer of 2007."

— *Capt. Gideon McClure*
Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

FUEL LEAK AND FIRE LEAD TO **F-16 CRASH**

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS)

— A fuel leak and subsequent aircraft fire led an F-16 to depart the prepared runway surface and crash while landing at Lamar Airport, Colo., June 28, according to an Air Force report released Nov. 22.

The pilot ejected from the aircraft and sustained minor injuries. No private property was destroyed, and the airport sustained minor damage.

The \$19 million aircraft, assigned to the Colorado Air National Guard's 140th Wing at Buckley Air Force Base, Colo., was destroyed when it departed the runway.

According to the accident investigation board report, the fuel leak was caused by an improperly installed engine augmentor fan manifold. This manifold supplies fuel to the rear section of the engine when the afterburner mode is selected.

The subsequent fire damaged the aircraft's engine nozzle, speed



An F-16 fuel leak and fire were caused by an improperly installed engine augmentor fan manifold.

brakes and flight controls, and rendered one of the channels of the left brake inoperative. The pilot flew a simulated flameout approach into the airport, but the inoperative left brake induced an uncontrollable drift to the right during landing. When the pilot realized he could not prevent the aircraft from departing the prepared runway, he successfully ejected.

The investigation determined there is substantial evidence that the failure to troubleshoot the damaged aircraft systems and the inadvertent movement of the brake channel switch contributed to the pilot's inability to stop the aircraft on the runway.

FOR THE RECORD...

... "The Air Force has an enviable flight safety record. But ... when things become routine, you start to get complacent. When you become complacent, that's when you make mistakes. And when you make mistakes? ... That's when someone gets hurt."

*— Maj. Gen. Lee McFann Jr.
Air Force Chief of Safety*

TORCH 
www.aetc.randolph.af.mil/se2/torch