

Air Education and Training Command's

TORCH



May/June 2007

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FIASCO
Instructor pilot learns lesson
from flying infraction
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doggy BOOT CAMP

When these
instructors bark orders,
their new recruits
are sure to listen

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BIRD BUSTERS

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For these recruits, sometimes their bark can be worse than their bite ... but, then again, with 400 to 500 pounds of pressure per square inch and razor sharp canines, you wouldn't want to be bit by one either. Check out the military working dog training at Lackland AFB, Texas, and maybe even learn a few tricks at safely handling your own pets.

15 In This Face-off, Arthur Is King

Our roving photographer finds himself being attacked by a military working dog named Arthur, and "King Arthur" rules with an iron fist ... er, bite!



by Sammie W. King

16 A Mom's Misery

Do you like to party or stop off for a few "cool ones" after work? If you do, this mom will tell you why you need to make plans to get home so you don't make the mistake of getting behind the wheel. Her daughter died at the hands of a drunk driver, leaving her heartbroken and leaving her 13-month-old grandson without a mother. The drunk driver? He's been "sleeping it off" the past nine years ... in prison.

20 Bird Busters!

With one of the busiest flight lines in the world, Vance AFB, Okla., had a serious problem threatening the lives of its pilots and its multi-million dollar aircraft ... birds. In particular, a flock of some 8,000 geese roamed the area, feasting in local farmers' fields. See how they managed to "uninvite" the birds to dinner.

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FROM THE COMMANDER

By Gen. **WILLIAM R. LOONEY III**
AETC Commander

ZERO IN ON SAFETY

Air Education and Training Command's "Operation Summer Survivor – Zero in on Safety" is running in conjunction with the "101 Critical Days of Summer," from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day (May 25 through Sept. 4). Sadly, the Air Force lost 18 Airmen during the 2006 campaign. However, this was a 38 percent reduction from the previous year, and we must continue to be diligent in our efforts to prevent the loss of the Air Force's most valuable resource: Our Airmen.

Last year's relative success – and the key to an even safer 2007 – centers on leadership embracing a culture of safety. From higher headquarters' inspections, staff assistance visits and my trips around the command, I know our supervisors are faithfully engaged in driving the safety message home and boosting our efforts. Remaining involved and committed to the well-being of our Airmen will guarantee the greatest chance for success in the coming days.

I'm excited about our "Operation Summer Survivor – Zero in on Safety" campaign. Safety offices throughout AETC are receiving well-timed safety material via dedicated Web sites and communities of practice. We currently have 30,000 Torch calendars on the street and sent out more than 17,000 copies of this May/June 2007 issue of Torch Magazine.

We have been planning for "Operation Summer Survivor – Zero in on Safety" for quite a while. Well before the campaign kicked off, I asked commanders and supervisors to dedicate a couple of hours prior to Memorial Day weekend to discuss mishap prevention within their organizations. Now I ask that all of you continue these discussions as the summer progresses. The message should be clear and consistent: We want all our people to enjoy the summer, but survive it safely!

“Sadly, the Air Force lost 18 Airmen during the 2006 campaign. However, this was a 38 percent reduction from the previous year, and we must continue to be diligent in our efforts to prevent the loss of the Air Force’s most valuable resource: Our Airmen.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Looney". The signature is stylized and fluid, written over a white background.

WILLIAM R. LOONEY III
General, USAF
Commander

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

A PRAYER FOR CHLOE

I want to applaud Capt. Kevin and Billie Lombardo for telling their heartbreaking story ("Tears for Chloe," March/April 2007 issue, cover story). As a father, I can't even imagine what they must be going through; yet, at the

same time, they are still brave and unselfish enough to warn others of the dangers of accidental poisonings. I want them to know that their efforts are not in vain. My wife and I have taken their message to heart and placed our medications and

toxic household items under lock and key. We will say a prayer for Chloe and the rest of the Lombardo family.

*Eric Pond
Via e-mail*



You always have good articles, but "Tears for Chloe" was especially well-written. Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. I was practically sobbing in my office as I read it, which, of course, drew attention from my co-workers. They also read it. There was hardly

a dry eye in the office that day. You took a tough, emotional subject and handled it well, while still getting an important safety message across. Thank you for such a personal, informative article.

*Lt. Debbie Cutler
Via e-mail*

I just got the March/April 2007 issue of Torch, and your cover story and photos – "Tears for Chloe" – were awesome! It's one of the most meaningful stories I've seen.

*Tech. Sgt. Matt Gilreath
Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.*

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.

FITTER FOR THE FUTURE



I have just read the January/February 2007 issue of Torch, and I was very impressed by the scope of the articles and especially the clear and extremely important safety messages they gave. These messages are as important to the Royal Air Force as they are to your own.

But I was particularly taken by the article "The No Fun Run" written by Lt. Col. Ella Sanjume on page 16. The need for fitness and its benefit in all aspects of our daily life cannot be understated. The way that Colonel Sanjume expressed this, humorously but not diminishing personal responsibility, was refreshing.

One sentence jumped out at me: "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." This is as true for my service as it is for yours, and I intend to use this statement in the future and perhaps – with your permission – use the article or parts of it to support my intent to help make Royal Air Force personnel fitter for the future.

*— Chief of the Air Staff's
Warrant Officer Lyndsay Morgan
RAF High Wycombe,
Naphill, England*

CREAM OF THE CROP

I'm with the 45th Space Wing technical library. Your photographs are some of the best in the Air Force! They really stand out in Torch, and accompany the articles well.

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: AETC FAMILY DAY SCHEDULE CHANGES

Air Education and Training Command has revised its 2007 Family Day schedule. The previously approved family days, which were printed in the 2007 Torch Calendar, were July 3, Dec. 24 and Dec. 31. The new dates are July 5, Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 (2008). Basically, the changes give people the day after the Fourth of July, Christmas and New Years holidays versus the day prior.

The guidelines in Air Force Instruction 36-3003, military leave program, must be followed regarding passes and chargeable leave. For military members required to perform duty during these holidays, commanders are encouraged to grant compensatory time-off during the first week following the holiday, mission requirements permitting.

Under current rules for Department of Defense civilians, commanders can encourage liberal leave, use of previously-earned

compensatory time, or use of already approved time-off awards. Group time-off awards, specifically for the purpose of giving the day off, are prohibited by AFI 36-1004, managing the civilian recognition program. Specifically, Paragraph 3.3.7 states, "Time-off awards shall not be granted to create the effect of a holiday or treated as administrative excuse or leave;" e.g., they shall not be granted in conjunction with a military "down" or "training" day, or the like, which would grant the entire civilian employee population or a majority of the civilian population, a time-off award to be used on a specified day. Your civilian personnel officers can provide more information on current rules and available options.

During your holiday activities, please think safety first. Use common sense, drive

defensively, and wear your seat belts. Commanders and supervisors must provide a safety briefing to their personnel to ensure they understand that risk management should be used on and off duty.

So mark the changes on your calendar, be safe, and enjoy the holidays!

— AETC Safety Directorate



TORCH POSTER SERIES

I work in the Life Skills Support Center. My officer in charge recently saw one of your posters in a magazine that really interested her. Now we are going to display the entire Torch poster series in our office. Thanks.

*Airman 1st Class Anissa Magwood
Altus Air Force Base, Okla.*

Like many of your readers, I was impressed with the "Ambition" poster I saw in your magazine. I visit a 5th grade class every other week and teach career-oriented math, science, geography, history, etc., topics to emphasize to the kids how important it is to stay in school and do well. As a former fighter pilot, I thought the picture looked great. Since each of the kids will be trying on my flying gear at our next class, that poster would make a great presentation to their graduation class.

*Lt. Col. Greg Krochta
Goodyear, Ariz.*

We at the 106th Rescue Wing, F.S. Gabreski Airport, have an operational readiness inspection coming up, and I plan to post your motivating, thought provoking poster series throughout the mayors tent and play areas to get our folks in the right "state of mind."

*Chief Master Sgt. Mike Rietvelt
Westhampton Beach, N.Y.*

I am a unit safety officer for the Headquarters Reserve National Security Space Institute, which recently stood up in Colorado. Although we are not an Air Education and Training Command unit, we receive Torch magazine and always find it useful in conveying the safety message.

We also like your poster series, which will be prominently displayed in office spaces and break rooms.

*Maj. Greg "Jeeves" Butler
Colorado Springs, Colo.*



AIRMAN DOWN!

SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — As the military training leader arrived on scene with his heart pounding and his thoughts racing, he spotted the fallen Airman's body fiercely thrashing around. Blood covered the Airman's face.

Moments later the MTL yells, "I've lost his pulse!"

February 21 began as an ordinary day for many, but would end extraordinarily for some at the 360th and 364th Training Squadrons.

Tech. Sgt. Norman D. Hicks III, a MTL for the 360th TRS was "mobile" that day, steadily patrolling the one-mile-run route on a bicycle. As the mobile MTL, he is required to carry a backpack that contains a first aid kit and an automated external defibrillator in case of an emergency.

When Hicks heard the Airmen-in-Training call for an MTL, he was the first to respond.

"I was only about 25 yards away, so my response to the scene was immediate," Hicks said.

As Hicks ran over to the Airman, he radioed the MTL in charge of that day's physical readiness training, Staff Sgt. Troy May, the non-commissioned officer of special activities for the 82nd Training Wing. May called 911.

When Hicks reached Airman 1st Class Anthony Vogel, he realized Vogel was not just down; he was having full blown convulsions and bleeding from a cut inside his lip where his face hit the sidewalk.

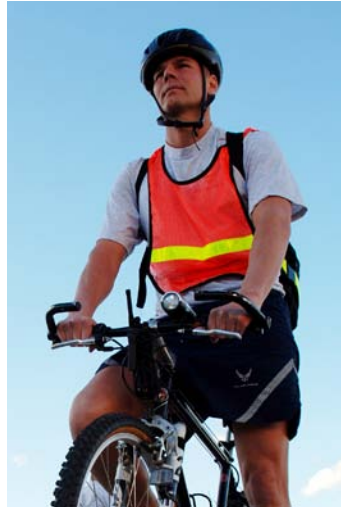
"It was pretty intense," Hicks said.

The sergeant said he knelt down to support Vogel's head and neck, preventing any further injury. He added that when the convulsions began to subside, he tried talking to the Airman to get some type of response.

"Within 30 seconds you could feel him weakening," Hicks said. "His breaths were slowing down ... then just gasps."

Master Sgt. Douglas Tigner, the flight chief of wing military training for the 82nd TRW, was only about a block away when the call "Airman down" came over the radio. He said his initial thought was that it was probably a case of dehydration. That thought quickly changed when he heard the Airman was having convulsions.

He quickened his pace, breaking from a jog to a full sprint. Tigner arrived on scene just as Hicks was stabilizing Vogel's head.



by Airman 1st Class Jacob Corbin

On bike patrol, Tech. Sgt. Norman D. Hicks III watches as Airmen-in-Training run by during physical readiness training. In February, Hicks helped save one of the Airmen after the trainee went into convulsions.

Then the situation worsened when Hicks could no longer find a pulse.

"I told Sergeant Smith to get the defibrillator unit," Hicks said. Staff Sgt. Duane Smith, another MTL with the 360th TRS, immediately pulled the unit from a backpack.

"It's a phenomenal machine," Tigner said. "Once the sticky pads are in place, the machine will begin analysis."

The severity of Vogel's health was fully understood once that analysis was complete. They were going to have to shock him.

"The readout displayed 'shock advised,' " Tigner said. "When it said 'shock now,' I looked to make sure everybody was clear and hit the button."

After that initial shock, Tigner said the defibrillator unit, still monitoring Vogel's vitals, advised them to start cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Years of CPR training kicked in and, without hesitation, the MTLs quickly and efficiently continued the lifesaving steps.

Hicks began chest compressions. Because of all the blood on Vogel's face, Tigner yelled for a mouth shield so he could begin respirations. With none available, the sergeant wiped away

the blood with a T-shirt and administered the rescue breaths.

"We went through two cycles and were beginning the next when he took a breath like it was the first of his life," Hicks said.

"That breath was pure relief for me," Tigner added.

Vogel, who was attending the heavy aircraft avionics course, was later sent to Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

According to Col. James King, 82nd Medical Group commander, "These men saved this Airman's life."

The MTL's credit the defibrillator and their Air Force training for saving the young Airman.

"He wouldn't have made it without it," Tigner said. "Your training kicks in, and you forget where you are. You just focus on the situation in front of you."

Hicks agreed. "My Air Force training played a major role," he said. "Understanding the training and being able to administer it is very important. (Don't) take it for granted."

— Master Sgt. Jennifer Isom
82nd Training Wing Public Affairs

REPORT ON CIVILIAN'S DEATH RELEASED

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — On April 9, the Air Force released a report of investigation into the Jan. 16 death of Paul F. Hammond Jr., citing the cause of death as accidental.

Hammond was assigned to the 97th Air Mobility Wing Maintenance Directorate as a KC-135 crew chief at Altus Air Force Base, Okla. While preparing an aircraft for a mission, he fell off a B-5 stand and sustained blunt force trauma injuries to his cranium leading to his death. Indirectly, human factors such as fatigue, complacency and channelized attention contributed to his death.

UNDERSTANDING SEVERE STORMS

DURING SPRING, SUMMER MONTHS

TORNADO TIPS

- In homes or small buildings, go to the basement (if available) or to an interior room on the lowest floor, such as a closet or bathroom. Wrap up in overcoats or blankets to provide protection from flying debris.
- In schools, hospitals, factories or shopping centers, go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor. Stay away from glass enclosed places or areas with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums and warehouses. Crouching down with head covered provides another level of protection.
- In high rise buildings, go to interior small rooms or halls. Stay away from exterior walls or glassy areas.
- In cars or mobile homes, abandon them immediately. Most deaths occur in cars and mobile homes. If someone is in either of

those locations, and will not move, leave them and go to a substantial structure or designated tornado shelter. If no suitable structure is nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands.

LIGHTNING TIPS

- When inside, avoid using the telephone (except for emergencies) or other electrical appliances, and do not take a bath or shower.
- If caught outdoors, go to a safe shelter immediately, such as inside a sturdy building. A hardtop automobile with the windows up also can offer fair protection.
- If people are out boating or swimming, get out of the water immediately and move to a safe shelter away from the water.



File photo

- For those in wooded areas, seek shelter under a thick growth of relatively small trees. If someone feels their hair standing on end, they should squat with their head between their knees. Do not lie flat.
- Avoid isolated trees or other tall objects, bodies of water, sheds, fences, convertible automobiles, tractors and motorcycles.

— 82nd Training Wing Public Affairs and the National Weather Service

'WINGMAN' IN ACTION

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — When Senior Airman Gene Gatzert found himself tumbling out of control in his sport utility vehicle Feb. 16, with his 2-year-old son Seth in the back seat, he was not aware that his wingman, Airman 1st Class Eric McJunkins, was in the car behind him, seeing the accident take place.

The Airmen are members of the 59th Medical Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Both are medical technicians with the 859th Surgical Operations Squadron.

"I realized too late that there was debris and gravel on the road, and my SUV's tail-end spun out of control. I did a few 360-degree spins and then rolled two or three times," Gatzert said. "We finally ended upright on busted wheels."

In severe pain, Gatzert said his main worry was his son.

Enter McJunkins.

"I saw Airman Gatzert hit the brakes, but the car slid sideways and then began to flip," McJunkins said. "I immediately stopped and ran to the car and tried to open the rear door to get to his son."

The door was stuck, but McJunkins was able to pry it open.

"Seth wasn't crying and didn't show any signs

of being injured, so I was able to get him out of the vehicle in his car seat," McJunkins said. "I checked again for injuries, but there were none that I could find."

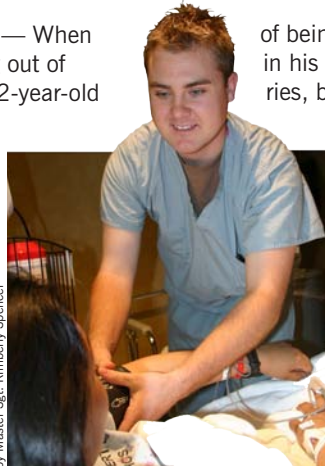
The Airman then turned his attention to his friend.

"Airman Gatzert was screaming in the front seat," McJunkins said. "When I turned to him he already had his seat belt unbuckled and was almost on the ground, trying to get to his son. I helped to control his movement and stabilize his c-spine. I told him his son was OK. He calmed down, and I was able to get a pedestrian who had also stopped to hold his head while I checked him for more injuries. There were none that I could find other than his back pain."

"Airman McJunkins made sure my son was all right," Gatzert said. "He was so calm and assured that he helped me to calm down — especially when he told me my son was clapping his hands and saying, 'Yea, daddy!' like it was fun."

"Airman McJunkins has only been an emergency medical technician for about a year and a half. I was amazed by his calm and skill level. He risked his life not knowing what conditions were present at the accident site. I feel that he saved our lives."

— Master Sgt. Kimberly Spencer
59th Medical Wing Public Affairs



by Master Sgt. Kimberly Spencer

Medical technician Airman 1st Class Eric McJunkins checks Basic Trainee Cindy Hernandez's vital signs on Ward 7D at Wilford Hall Medical Center. McJunkin's quick response to a vehicle accident involving a fellow 859th Surgical Operations Squadron member was instrumental in saving the lives of the member and his son.

DIDN'T MEAN TO PRY...

While driving home from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, a space center employee got quite a surprise. A large pry-bar pierced the front of his car, stopping inches from the driver's face. The pry-bar had been on the road, and another vehicle ran over it, kicking it up just enough to cause the hair-raising scene.

The driver said he was in his usual "zone," keeping the proper distance, watching everything around him, but deep in the thought of the moment. Suddenly, there was a loud "kaboom" that sounded like it came from his car. He hadn't seen or heard anything that would warn him something was about to happen — no brake lights, swerving cars, or anything.

He moved the steering wheel back and forth a little. The tires were OK. He pushed on the brakes. They checked out OK too. He pressed the accelerator. The engine seemed to be running fine. There were no more noises of any kind.

Then it caught his eye.

He stared in disbelief at the huge steel pry-bar sticking out of the hood, pointing directly at his face. The hair stood up on his neck.

No telling how long the pry bar had lain in the road, before the car in front of him ran over it and sent it into the air with just the right trajectory.

When he pulled over and shut off his vehicle, the pry-bar had been welded to the hood, which was glowing cherry red where the bar touched it. The pry-bar had gone right through the battery.

The driver said he felt fortunate to be alive and uninjured and that no one else was hurt. He also wanted to pass on this safety

message: Secure the load that you are transporting, even if you are "just going a short distance." You don't want anything you are transporting to end up on the road and possibly harm other people or cause damage to other vehicles.



A pry-bar lying in the road speared a Kennedy Space Center employee's vehicle when the car in front of him ran over it during rush-hour traffic.

DON'T GO DOWN WITH THE SHIP

A 32-year-old woman fell asleep at the wheel and drove her car into a 30-foot-deep canal. Alarmed by her predicament, she dialed 911 from her cell phone.

The operator urged her to roll down her windows or open the door, but she refused.

"If I do that, all the water is going to come in!" the frightened and confused woman said.

The woman was a strong swimmer

and could have paddled to safety, if only she had managed to escape from her vehicle. Instead, her 1998 BMW with her lifeless body inside had to be pulled from the canal.

If you are unlucky enough to find yourself trapped in a sinking car, it is essential to roll the windows down immediately so that you can escape from the vehicle. Once the bottom of your door is even slightly submerged, the water pressure makes it almost impossible to

open the door until the car is nearly full, which equalizes the pressure. By then it's probably too late.

It takes a car up to 10 minutes to sink, depending on how well sealed the vehicle is, but the electrical system may fail much sooner if the water penetrated the body and short-circuits the wires. In most cars with automatic windows, the motor that powers the window is located halfway up the car door, so you must act fast if you plan to survive.

HOW TO GET QUALITY H₂O

IN THE FIELD

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — The problem of “Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink” can apply as much to deployed troops cut off from their pure water supply as it did to the ancient mariner stranded at sea in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s beloved poem.

Clean water is critical to military operations, used in everything from drinking to hygiene and field sanitation to food preparation to medical care, said Army Maj. Bill Bettin, chief of the field water section for the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine here.

The typical deployed troop pours through 15 to 20 gallons of water a day, he said.

Recognizing the importance of water to the military mission, the services have sophisticated water purification and supply networks to ensure troops are never left high and dry. An old Quartermaster Corps adage captures water’s importance to servicemembers: “The ultimate weapon runs on water, and everything else runs on fuel.”

But what happens when troops find themselves operating away from their established water supply lines with little chance of getting their water supply replenished before it runs out?

Bacteria, viruses and parasites make many local water sources unsafe, Bettin said, and simply boiling water isn’t always enough to ensure contaminants are destroyed.

So for emergency situations or operations in remote areas with no water resupply available, troops resort to disinfecting surface water they find with iodine tablets or purifying it with charcoal-based filtering systems. The problem, Bettin said, is that current military-issued purifiers work slowly and may not be as effective as possible.

Commercial water-purification systems have become popular among hikers and campers, and outdoor magazines and catalogs tout their benefits. But until recently, the military hadn’t systematically tested these systems and wasn’t able to tell deploying units which ones might best suit their needs, Bettin said.

To come up with an answer, the Army Center for Health Pro-

The Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine launched an 18-month scientific study of 68 commercial, off-the-shelf water-purification systems. ... They came up with an online decision tool units can use to select the best water purification system for their exact circumstances: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/wpd/>.

motion and Preventive Medicine launched an 18-month scientific study of 68 commercial, off-the-shelf water-purification systems.

As they evaluated these systems, Bettin and his staff quickly realized that there’s no one-size-fits-all answer to military water-purification requirements.

“We had planned to pick one product to recommend, but because of the different scenarios units operate under, there was no one solution for every unit,” he said.

Instead, they came up with an online decision tool units can use to select the best water purification system for their exact circumstances. That tool, posted on the center’s Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/wpd/>, helps units evaluate what might work best for them and what doesn’t work at all, he said.

“We found that some (commercial) claims were groundless, and we were able to weed out the non-performers,” he said.

Which personal water purifier works best depends on a range of considerations, Bettin said. Units operating at a stationary base camp might find that one system best fits their needs, while troops on the move, either mounted or dismounted, might need something altogether different. In an emergency situation that leaves forces cut off from their existing supply lines, an entirely different system might be the answer, he said.

But other factors play into the decision, as well, including the size and weight of the system, how easy it is to use, its cost, and most importantly, its effectiveness.

The new decision tool has proven to be popular among military members trying to sift through the myriad commercial pitches by water-purification companies.

“We’ve gotten feedback from users who like that it’s easy to use and apply,” Bettin said.

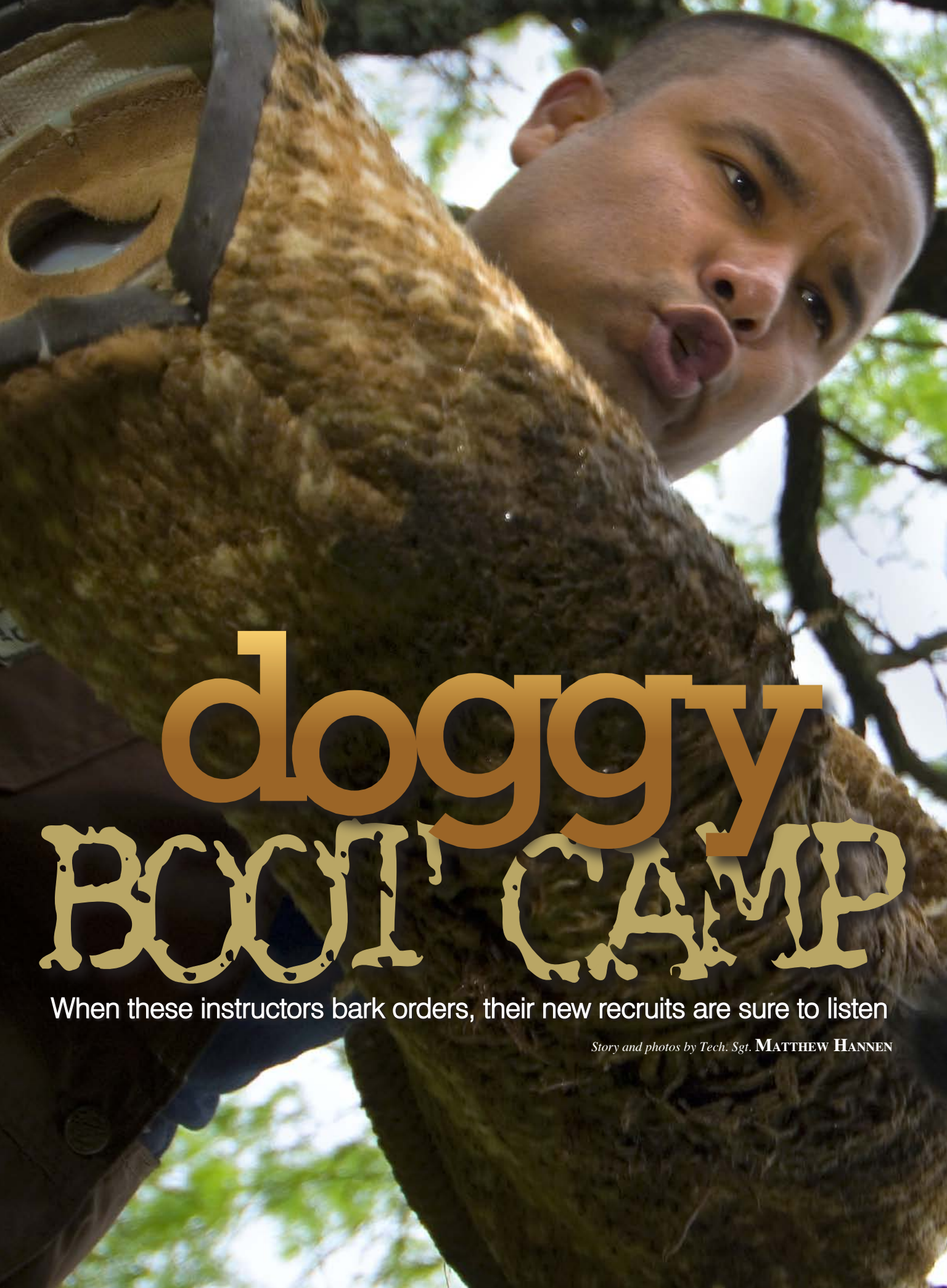
Civilian outdoorsmen are also accessing the site and reporting its value, he said. Among them was a high school teacher who thanked Bettin for helping him select water-purification systems for a school camping trip.

Just how effective the new site has been in helping prevent troops from drinking contaminated water or having to scale back their water usage due to shortages is tough to tell, Bettin acknowledged.

“That’s the whole challenge of preventive medicine,” he said. “We know that it’s providing a positive result, but it’s hard to report what you’ve prevented.”

— Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

Commercial water-purification systems have become popular among hikers and campers, and outdoor magazines and catalogs tout their benefits. But until recently, the military hadn’t systematically tested these systems and wasn’t able to tell deploying units which ones might best suit their needs.



doggy BOOI' CAMP

When these instructors bark orders, their new recruits are sure to listen

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. MATTHEW HANNEN



To get the dog's adrenaline flowing,
Staff Sgt. Adolph Rodriguez acts as an aggressor. An
average canine has 120 training days at Lackland AFB,
Texas, to be certified for patrol or detection duties.

He sizes up his troops with an icy glare. As he scrutinizes his trainees' every move, he wonders to himself, "Which one will be a problem? Who will be crazy, lazy, skittish, clumsy or a slow learner? And who will separate himself as the best of the best?"





Teaching a dog to attack and release on command is paramount.

Here, Army Sgt. 1st Class James Dalton, an evaluator, restrains one of the canine trainees before unleashing him upon Marine Sgt. Jason Law, a dog trainer, while Staff Sgt. Shawn Alexander observes.

He barks out his commands, and they do their most to try to please him. Still, the instructor knows he has his work cut out for him. This group is really doggin' it.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing – especially since these new recruits are, after all, dogs.

The Department of Defense Military Working Dog Program at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, supports a 120-day training course. Part of the course is in drug and bomb detection and the other part is patrol. The 341st Training Squadron trains more than 1,300 dogs DOD-wide. Lackland's veterinary clinic serves as the "Wilford Hall Medical Center" for military working dogs that get injured or become severely ill.

"We are unique in that we don't only train the two-legged student but also the four-legged student," said Roy Sanchez, military working dog training development chief. "We are a basic training for dogs if you will."

The dogs come in raw and undisciplined, and this canine boot camp ensures they leave Lackland certified for a specific level of training, Sanchez said.

Following the horrific terrorist attacks

of 9/11, "our program has become one of the most important tools in the DOD arsenal," Sanchez said. "Whether it's a patrol dog that protects a base or a bomb detection dog that alerts troops to an IED (improvised explosive device),

our program has a positive impact upon the lives of our military members and the safety of our country."

As with any student new into training, it takes time to teach the dogs everything they'll need to know to "graduate" to the next level – field training. No "cramming for the test" in this program.

"We teach the dog a little bit every day over an extended period of time," said Dr. Stewart Hilliard, chief of the military working dog course.

"That gives them

plenty of time to learn their new skills. It's a self-paced program to cater to the individual dog's needs, but we do have a target to have them trained in less than 120 days."

There are three phases of the course: the introductory phase, the detection phase, and the patrol phase, Hilliard said.

The current military working dog model is a lot like the civilian law



Nice catch! Marine Sgt. Joshua Delancey endures a training attack.

Military working dog handlers

learn which dogs are aggressive and confident and which ones are meek and skittish, and work with them accordingly.



Like a missile launching toward its target,
a military working dog attacks canine handler Staff
Sgt. Jeremy Toliver as part of his aggressor training.



Rewarding a dog during obedience training can be a tricky business. A lot of bite injuries occur when trainers put their hands close to a dog's mouth and lose situational awareness. The dogs tend to grab the first object they see with their teeth.

enforcement patrol dog: a dog of steady, stable character that is capable of aggression under certain circumstances, such as on command, when attacked or when the handler is attacked, Hilliard said.

"The key to training these dogs is keeping an open mind," said Tech. Sgt. Steven Lopez, military working dog

trainer. "You try to keep everything as positive as possible; because when you do negative stuff, all you're going to do is shut down the dog and he's not going to want to work."

Another key to success is discipline and obedience, Lopez said. Trainers must control the canine's need to bite and dominate their prey, he said.

This training doesn't come without a risk to the troops and the dogs.

For the dogs, the main risks are the San Antonio heat and the physical strains of their training, which can lead to injury.

"Most of the dogs are spirited enough that they will work themselves hard in the heat, resulting in heat-related injuries," Hilliard said. "Handlers need to be aware of this danger to protect the dogs."

As for the risks to the trainers, the most obvious are 42 bone-crunching teeth. Yes, handlers do get bit from time to time.

"It's safe to say that a majority of the bite wounds to troops are not from aggression with the dogs; they are a



result of accidents in playing with the dog with rubber balls (part of their training)," Hilliard said. "For example, just recently

PREVENTION

TIPS TO AVOID DOG BITES

1. Remain calm, confident and authoritative around dogs. If a person is scared or edgy, the dog will get scared and edgy. Once the dog gets scared he may bite out of fear.

2. If a dog gets aggressive, stay still. Don't run like a scared rabbit. Dogs are like wolves in that way: If they see a rabbit, they will chase it and bite it.

3. Demand obedience. Dogs are like children; they will take what you give them.

4. Be careful playing aggressive games like tug-of-war. This teaches a dog to bite during playtime.

5. Never disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating or caring for puppies.

6. Do not pet a dog without letting it see and sniff you first.

7. Avoid stray dogs. You don't know how they will react. Also, avoid direct eye contact with them, as direct eye contact is a challenge – an aggressive form of body language to a dog.

— 341st Training Squadron



Dog handler student

Army Sgt. "Stoney" Stone fires a pistol, then lays it down so the dog can sniff it. Getting military working dogs used to the sound of gunfire is part of their training.

a piece of his hand was taken too. You can't lose focus or situational awareness."

Nevertheless, not all dogs are playing when they bite.

"I think a lot of times people get bit because they get scared," said Staff Sgt. Shawn Alexander, a military working dog trainer. "When a person gets scared, the dog gets scared. It just gets worse from there, because a dog will bite out of fear. The more confident you are, the less likely it is you will be bitten. If you run scared like a rabbit ... well, dogs are like wolves; if they see a rabbit, they chase it and bite it."

But bites aren't the only thing handlers have to worry about. The dogs, primarily German shepherds and Belgian malimars, range in weight from 55 to 100 pounds, and are fast and strong. When they pounce on a trainer, it is equivalent to a 300-pound man in athletic condition coming at you, the instructors said.

"The inherent risk for the dog trainers is we're buying these dogs that are specifically selected for aggression,"

we had a troop who at a moment of inattention allowed the dog to take a ball which happened to be in his hand, and





Taking a dog through an obstacle course, Marine Sgt. Jason Law performs a crucial part of its discipline training.

said Tech. Sgt. Joel Burton, another military working dog trainer. “Then you’re training these young dogs to bite and hold. You work at least three dogs a person. So when you’re out there catching dog after dog after dog, it takes a toll on your body.”

The troops have to control the dogs all day. Even walking them from one place to another for hours every day on a leash with them pulling against you can be strenuous, according to Hilliard.

“We’ve had accidents where people have slipped in the mud, and the dog was pulling on them and they get injured,” Hilliard said.

But most of the injuries to troops happen from wear and tear over time.

Handling a big, strong animal “takes a toll on your shoulders, knees, neck and back,” Burton said. “We have had quite a few back injuries.”

The handlers reduce their risk of injury by working out nearly every day to stay physically fit and flexible. They also learn to move with the dogs to avoid injuries to themselves and the animals.

Of course, it doesn’t help that each dog has its own personality, which makes them somewhat unpredictable.

“My favorite dog of all time was Hero,” Hilliard said. “He was a



After a hard day of training, Staff Sgt. Shawn Alexander cares for a dog after returning him to his kennel.

courageous, formidable dog, and a strong and willing worker. He was very stable. On the other hand, I also remember Robby 2. He was unstable. He seriously

bit two handlers. I worked with him in a scientific study on olfactory detection. I was very afraid of him but wouldn’t let him know it.”

If dog and handler survive the intensive training, there’s no better day than certification day, Burton said.

“There’s a lot of excitement on cert day,” he said. “But handlers have to control their nerves. If the handler is nervous, then the dog will be too. We have a saying in the dog handler career field: ‘Everything goes down leash.’”

If the dog does not pass certification, he is recycled for more training. If he does pass, it’s on to bigger and better things.

“Our certification reflects that this dog has passed his basic training course; he is now ready to be sent to the field to enter the kind of training that will ready him for field certification,” Hilliard said. “Field training is what makes him deployable (whether on base or in combat conditions).”

According to Lopez, the military working dog program is more important than ever.

“The way people are trying to hide bombs and drugs is evolving, so we need to always be focused on creating a better top quality dog,” he said.

“Doggy boot camp” ensures that. ✦

ARTHUR IS KING

Photographer faces off with attack dog

Arthur had a reputation for having a few screws loose. But I must have been crazier than him, because I taunted him into a tussle. I should have known better; Arthur also is known for having a short fuse. As he unleashed his fury upon me like a 300-pound defensive lineman blindsiding a helpless quarterback, I began to crumble to the ground and thought, "What did I get myself into?"

As my head bounced off the ground like a basketball, one thought penetrated the haze with crystal clarity: "I didn't get myself into this; my evil editor did!"

Four weeks earlier he told me he wanted me to do a story on military working dog training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. I agreed.

Then he added with a twinkle in his eye, "Oh, by the way, I'd like you to let one of the dogs attack you (heh, heh, heh)."

You see, Arthur is an 87-pound German Shepard with 42 bone-crunching teeth and a bad attitude.

When my editor first informed me of my next writing and photo assignment, I thought he was joking. After all, we do work for a safety office. But, no, despite his cackling, he was quite serious. I'm starting to think he has a life insurance policy out on me.

Nevertheless, I saluted smartly and began to prepare for my mauling. After all, it was one more EPR bullet: "Performed in an outstanding fashion as puppy chow."

The "attack Matt Hannen day" came like a mosquito diving for a meal. I met with Staff Sgt. Shawn Alexander, one of the dog trainers, and he handed me a rather bulky suit. The suit is nearly 3 inches thick and made of a sturdy synthetic fabric to protect you from the dog's bite. When I put on my new ensemble, I looked like the Michelin Man. And even on a comfortable 70-degree day, I roasted under the heavily padded garment.

Alexander and his team coached me on how to "survive" the brutal assault, and gave me a few safety tips: "Keep your hands inside the arms of the suit. Move with the dog, to prevent pulling muscles or straining joints. Keep your arm out and your head back, because the dog will latch onto the first thing he sees."

Safety briefings are always important. And for this one, in particular, I was all ears. I especially took note of that tip to keep my unprotected head back ... no sense in getting my face chewed off.

Finally, the moment of truth.

Arthur didn't seem to like me any better than my editor did. He sunk his teeth into my arm, and then my leg. Even with the protective suit, I could feel the nearly 500 pounds of pressure per square inch that Arthur's mouth was reputed to deliver. Trapped in his vice, he proceeded to try to tear off my limbs.

As the trainers drug him off, I stood up and thought to myself, "Well, that wasn't so bad."

Then my editor, who, not surprisingly, had volunteered to shoot the photographs of my altercation with Arthur, said with relish, "OK, we'll have to do this a few more times (heh, heh, heh)."

A half a dozen violent confrontations later, I had no doubts about the capability of a military working dog attack and suppression. Any thoughts of beginning a life of crime disappeared with the first onslaught.

Soaked with sweat, exhausted, sore and sporting a throbbing headache, I sat down on a bench while the trainers helped me get out of my suit. They pulled the legs of the suit, and I shot off the bench and fell on my rear with a thud. My foggy brain could only make out one thing ... a familiar cackling rising through the din.

— Tech. Sgt. Matthew Hannen



During an attack demonstration, Arthur, an 87-pound German shepherd and a military working dog at Lackland AFB, Texas, takes down photojournalist Tech. Sgt. Matt Hannen (below), who finds himself on the wrong end of the camera.





A Mom's *Misery*

Air Force civilian loses daughter to drunk driver

By **JEANNINE ROBERTS** as told to **TIM BARELA**
Illustration and composite by **SAMMIE W. KING**

I recognized her long, dark, curly hair immediately. She lay under a white sheet, simply appearing to rest peacefully. She didn't seem to have a scratch. Hopeful, I started bargaining with God: "Please, Lord, just let her open her eyes, and I will do anything."

Not a movement. Not a sound. Nothing. I wanted to touch her, but I was afraid. When I finally gathered up the courage to grasp her hand, it was icy cold. A wretched emptiness filled me. I knew my baby was gone.

The violent crash that broke her rib, which then punctured her heart, had broken my heart as well. And why? ... It was all so senseless.

When I read the e-mails about Airmen getting caught driving drunk, all the old feelings knotted up my stomach like a volcano about to erupt. Each transgression caused me to relive my private torture. I felt anger, sadness, frustration and a sense of helplessness. I wanted to scream, "Wake up! ... You just don't know the pain you can cause."

What could I do to get through to these Airmen or anybody who chooses to drink alcohol and then get behind the wheel of a vehicle? What could I do to make a difference?

Deep down, I knew the answer. I just wasn't sure if I was strong enough to do it.

But I had to tell her story. ... I owed that much to Holly.

Holly V. McBride is my daughter. She was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, on Dec. 22, 1977, one of the best days of my life. She grew up a happy girl, with a goofy grin seemingly permanently affixed to her beautiful face. No matter what kind of day you were having, when you saw her smile, it cheered you up like some sort of magic spell. She had that effect on nearly everyone around her.

She simply loved life and lived it to the fullest. She was a drum major in band, played basketball and softball, and she



By Tech. Sgt. Matthew Hannan

To prevent another drunk driving fatality,

Jeannine Roberts relives her private torture by sharing her story with others. Roberts, with the 82nd Communications Squadron at Sheppard AFB, Texas, lost her 20-year-old daughter to a drunk driver.

loved dancing, singing, sewing, cooking, fishing, camping, four-wheeling and canoeing. But most of all she loved children. Even in high school, she worked with a children's mentoring program.

As an adult living in Naples, Fla., she knew she wanted to continue working with kids. So she worked for an orthodontist, training to be a dental hygienist. What a perfect profession for someone who was known for lighting up a room with her smile; now she would be able to help kids get a brighter, more confident smile of their own.

When she had her son Dakota Dec. 28, 1996, her love for children only grew. She cherished her baby boy.

Since they had birthdays only six days apart, Holly and Dakota had just celebrated her 20th birthday and his first in December 1997. And things were only getting better. By Jan. 31, 1998, Steve Carrington, Holly's longtime boyfriend and Dakota's father, had proposed to Holly, and they were going to get together to discuss wedding plans that night. The day

before, I had come down with a bad case of the flu. Dakota was staying at my house. However, since I was sick, Holly decided to take him to his other grandparent's house in Alva, Fla., so she and Steve could make their plans for a long life together.

She never made it.

A half mile from her soon-to-be in-law's house, Holly, with Dakota in his car seat, drove along Bateman Road, a dark, two-lane street. A van, weaving in and out of traffic, approached. Holly never had a chance.

My husband John and I sat on the couch watching TV that fateful evening when the phone rang a little after 9 p.m. John answered it. With a puzzled look on his face, he handed the phone to me and said he didn't know who it was.

As I said "Hello," I recognized Steve's voice, but something was wrong. His voice cracked as he tried to find the courage to tell me that Holly had been in an accident.

"Jeannine, I am so sorry," he said. "They say she's not going to make it!"

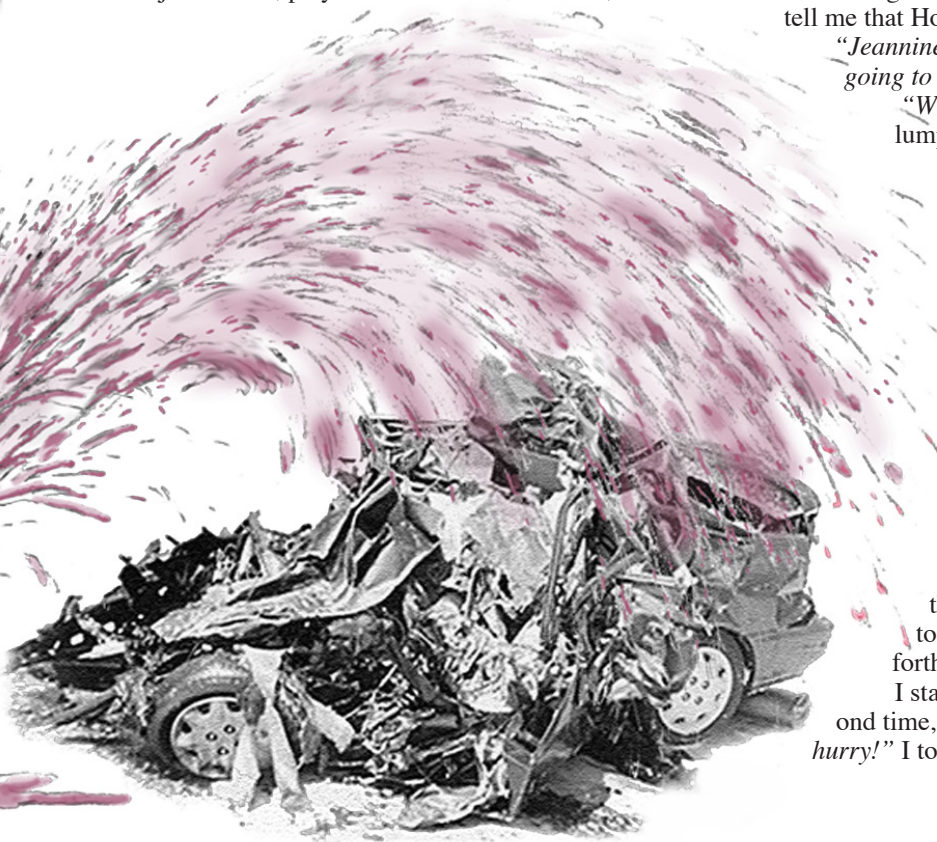
"What?" I screamed, with my heart pounding and a lump in my throat. "No!"

Crying now, Steve told me to hurry and get to the hospital. I threw down the phone and yelled for John and Cajun, Holly's younger brother. We rushed to the truck and began our frantic race against time.

The hospital was in Fort Myers, Fla., about 30 miles away. While speeding down the interstate, fear set in that we weren't going to make it in time. With my husband clutching my arm, I began crying and screaming, "Oh my God, please don't let her die! Please drive faster!"

John had already hit speeds of 90 mph, but that wasn't fast enough for me. I wanted him to drive 150. I can still feel the truck laboring under the speed, John pushing its limits trying to get to Holly. And all the while, I'm rocking back and forth, trying to urge the truck to go even faster.

I start wishing I had driven. When Steve called a second time, and pleaded, "Jeannine, where are you? Please hurry!" I told John to pull over and let me drive. He knew I



“I can still feel the truck laboring under the speed, John pushing its limits trying to get to Holly. And I’m rocking back and forth, trying to urge the truck to go even faster. ... Do you know what it’s like to race against time desperately trying to get somewhere fast before someone you love dies?”

wasn’t thinking clearly. He just kept driving.

Do you know what it’s like to race against time desperately trying to get somewhere fast before someone you love dies?

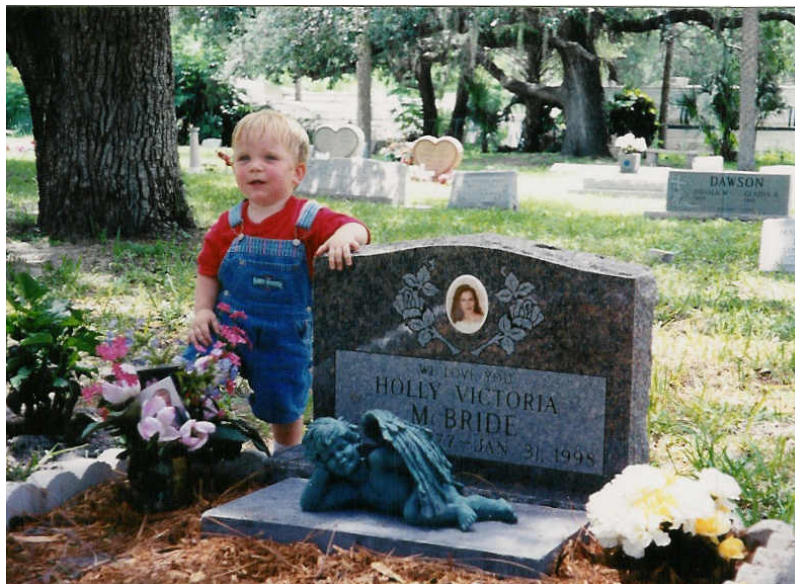
When Steve called a third time, his words sent a chill over me like I had never felt before.

“Jeannine, she’s dead!”

I remember screaming and beating the dash of the truck with my fist. John’s hand was on my shoulder trying unsuccessfully to calm me down. I screamed for John to hurry. That moment was the worst feeling in my life. I felt helpless and angry at the same time. I just couldn’t get there fast enough to say goodbye and I love you one last time.

When we arrived at the hospital, I saw some of Steve’s family in the reception area. I asked about Dakota. They told me that he was being X-rayed for any injuries but would survive.

As I was being led to the room where Holly was, I asked the sheriff what happened. He told me that Holly was hit head on by a drunk driver, an 18-year-old boy named Joel. I asked if he was OK or if he was fighting for his life. He said he was a little banged up, but he’d make it.



Dakota, Holly McBrides’s 13-month-old son, visits her gravesite at a cemetery in Bonita Springs, Fla., shortly after a drunk driver crashed into them.

What was I suppose to feel? Part of me wanted Joel to live, and part of me felt rage and hoped that he, too, would die.

Before entering the room where Holly was, horror overtook me, and I began shaking and feeling cold.

When we entered the room she was lying there on a table, flat on her back, a white sheet draped softly across her and her beautiful brown eyes closed ... forever. I wanted her to look at me just one more time and again say the words she said just earlier that day, *“Mama, you know I love you!”*

I am still waiting to

hear those words from her.

I stood over her body and prayed for a miracle. I thought if I stood there long enough that she would wake up. As I stroked her hair, I softly kept repeating, *“Holly, please wake up. It’s Mama, Holly. I love you.”*

When I touched her hand, she felt as if she’d been in a freezer. I began to realize that life had left her body. I didn’t want to leave her side because I knew it meant admitting she was gone. I kissed her cold lips and said, *“Holly, I don’t want you to go. I love you, baby girl.”*

John finally had to pull me away.

I just wanted her to live. I wanted to give her birthday cards, Christmas cards, visit her and tell her I love her.

Even at the funeral, as they lowered her body into the ground and covered it with dirt, I hoped that somehow she would give us a sign that she was still alive.

My daughter — my best friend — was gone.

When I found out the details of the crash, my anger deepened. Joel had been partying most of that day, but still decided to get behind the wheel of a vehicle.

The lady who was driving in front of Holly saw him cut into her lane. The truck next to him slowed down so he could get over, but he made no attempt to do so. The lady veered off the road and into a ditch. The van plowed through the rear of her vehicle and hit Holly's 1997 Ford Probe head-on.

The collision was so violent that Holly hit the steering wheel with sickening force. The impact broke her rib, which punctured her heart. Dakota's car seat cracked in the middle but did its job. My 13-month-old grandson couldn't walk for a couple of weeks because his legs were too sore, but at least he was alive. Doctors worried that he could have suffered brain damage from the crash, but thankfully that wasn't the case.

As for Joel, his blood alcohol content was .26, far above the minimum legal driving limit of .08. He killed Holly the instant he put his keys into the van.

I don't hate Joel. I actually feel sorry for him. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison. He will get out early this June for good behavior. But still, he lost nine years of his young life, and his family suffered, too.

I will write him a letter before he

goes free. I don't know exactly what it will say, but the words also could be aimed at these Airmen I read about or anyone else who chooses to drink and drive.

I know that I will tell him that Holly's big brown eyes, gorgeous smile and kind heart are in my thoughts every day. I will tell him that I remember her taking me by the hand and dancing around the living room during the Top 10 Countdown on the radio. I remember the hugs and kisses she'd surprise me with, and the times she would climb into bed with me and say, "Let's cuddle, Mom." So, I would wrap my arms around her body, kiss her and say, "Goodnight, Pumpkin. I love you."

I will tell him Dakota is 10 now, living with his father, his stepmother and two younger half brothers. He calls Holly his "angel mama," but he'll never really know her or how special a person she was.

I will tell him to take responsibility for what has happened. Don't make excuses. Tell your family and friends what happened, so they won't make the same mistake. Don't let this kind of tragedy happen again.

And to anyone else who will listen, I will say how many parents have to lose children before people take notice? I lost a daughter. My grandson lost a mother. If you don't care about yourself, then at least think about the other people you could affect. If you've been drinking, give up your keys and save a life.

I never knew just how precious each moment Holly and I spent together really meant. I never knew that Saturday — Jan. 31, 1998 — would be our last day together. ✕



Courtesy photo

A drunk driver hit and killed Holly McBride on Jan. 31, 1998, while she was driving with her 13-month-old son.

Ms. Roberts is with the 82nd Communications Squadron Multi-media Center Presentations Department at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.

Drunk Driving Statistics

- In 2005, 16,885 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes — an average of one almost every half-hour. These deaths constituted approximately 39 percent of the 43,443 total traffic fatalities.
- Thirty percent of all fatal crashes during the week were alcohol-related, compared to 51 percent on weekends. For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate was 5 percent during the week and 12 percent during the weekend.
- For fatal crashes occurring from midnight to 3 a.m., 77 percent involved alcohol. The next most dangerous time period for alcohol-related crash deaths was 9 p.m. to midnight, followed by 3 a.m. to 6 a.m.
- The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is more than three times as high at night as during the day (60 percent vs. 18 percent). For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is five times as high at night (16 percent vs. 3 percent).
- The average person metabolizes alcohol at the rate of about one drink per hour. Only time will sober a person up. Drinking strong coffee, exercising or taking a cold shower will not help.
- A standard drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 72-proof distilled spirits, all of which contain the same amount of alcohol — about .54 ounces.
- Beer is the drink of choice in most cases of heavy drinking, binge drinking, drunk driving and underage drinking. Alcohol-related fatalities are caused primarily by the consumption of beer (80 percent) followed by liquor/wine at 20 percent.

- Nearly three in every 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.

— National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Making a Difference

The Airmen Against Drunk Driving program at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, is making a difference. The volunteers who run the program have logged nearly 15,000 hours the past three years working Friday and Saturday nights to curb drunk driving.

They have answered hundreds of calls and arranged safe rides home for people who have had too much to drink. The following is a breakdown of the number of rides they have provided (and potential lives saved) over the past three years.

- 2005: **822**
- 2006: **908**
- 2007: **212** (to date)

— Information courtesy of 82nd Training Wing Public Affairs



BIRD BUSTERS!

USDA banishes 'fowl guests'
outside Vance AFB

Story and photo by 2nd Lt. JAMES JUSTICE



Open areas that make northwest Oklahoma a great location for a flying training base also are very inviting to some natural fliers. Unfortunately, the two groups of fliers can't safely share the same air space, especially when geese are using the fields just outside Vance Air Force Base, Okla., for their temporary base. Those fields lay directly beneath the pattern for the Air Force's second busiest flight line.

Increasing waterfowl populations, growing at nearly 8 percent per year, placed a migratory flock of more than 8,000 geese in a wheat field north of Vance. Several hundred ducks also landed there. The birds are attracted to a "buffet" of food sources offered in Enid's agricultural area.

While there were no problems enforcing bird control measures inside the base's fenced perimeter, the Air Force legally is unable to act off base. Matt Smith, a U.S.

Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services biological science technician, said, "Vance needed help outside the fence, so they called us."

The USDA's ability to work in the area surrounding the base was critical to successfully solving the geese problem, said Capt. Jamie Baugh, Vance's chief of flight safety.

"They have capabilities that (we don't)," the captain said. "Legally they can do things (we can't)."

They served as a link between base leadership and the community to tackle the bird problem head-on by ensuring the needs of the base and its flying activities were understood by all.

Jesse Townsend, another USDA biological science technician, said, "We worked with the City of Enid and local farmers. They were happy to get the geese off their wheat."

Smith said they used a sophisticated grid system and clear

communications with the base to "get the birds in the habit of landing somewhere else." The two gentlemen used pyrotechnics along with noise-makers such as "bangers" and "screamers" to disperse the birds. They also had to shoot some, but mostly used methods that did not harm the birds. Ultimately, they changed the local fields from a dinner invitation to an "uninvitation."

"Now the birds see our truck coming, and they fly away," Smith said.

Communications between the supervisors of flying and the USDA techs was the key to safely dispersing the birds. Scattering the birds at the wrong moment could have caused a bird strike incident.

"(The biological science technicians) would call directly to the supervisors of flying," said Maj. Randy Sealy, 71st Operations Group SOF manager. "We'd create a break in traffic so they could deal with the birds, or we'd have them wait for aircraft to pass. It didn't slow down operations at all."

The process, which started Feb. 21 and continued through April 12, paid

"When we started there were 8,000 geese (near the base); now there are 25 to 30 resident geese remaining."

off in drastically reduced bird numbers.

"When we started there were 8,000 geese; now there are 25 to 30 resident geese remaining," Smith said.

The reduction in bird numbers created a safer airspace.

"The cooperation with the USDA has been amazing," Baugh said. "They told us 'We will not fail.'"

And they didn't. For the 71st Flying Training Wing, the joint venture has been a resounding success.

"You can definitely see a (dramatic) change in the amount of birds near the base," Smith said. ✪

Lieutenant Justice is with the 71st Flying Training Wing Public Affairs at Vance Air Force Base, Okla.

Wildlife Services biological science technicians Jesse Townsend (left) and Matt Smith, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, prepare to fire pyrotechnics to scare away geese and other birds that like to make the farming area around Vance AFB, Okla., their private "buffet." Dispersing the birds to other locations makes flying safer for aircraft such as the BE-20 (right).



CELL PHONE FIASCO

Composite illustration by **SAMMIE W. KING**

The following article was submitted anonymously to the commander of Training Air Wing FIVE at Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Milton, Fla. A student used an end of training critique to assert that the instructor had made a cell phone call while airborne in a T-34. The article below presents the instructor's side of the story.

With relentless training and expert execution, Department of Defense aviators maintain the ability to put bombs on target, transport critical supplies to needing hands, and achieve aerial supremacy in each theater in which we operate. Yet, we still have unreasonable numbers of mishap aircraft and crews and offer up kudos for units who have mishap-free milestones.

If we could only get rid of the time consuming and monotonous operational risk management and crew resource management type programs and just "train like we fight" and "fight like we train," we shouldn't have a need for such "corporateness" in our mature and professional military. ... Right?

This isn't a rhetorical question; stop and think about the last crew resource management or operational risk management briefing you attended. How many times did you complain or think there was someplace better to be?

How does a seemingly seasoned professional aviator with six years mission qualified experience and an equal number of aerial decorations end up compromising that good reputation? Perhaps I

yawned one too many times during the last round of safety briefings. Maybe I got complacent or simply failed to exercise the same judgment I used to when performing operationally.

A scenario similar to "get-home-itis" and the confidence of being with a "good student" led me into the writer's chair. Perhaps it's time to focus on "training like we fight." It seems as though we are more likely to lose lives and bend metal in training than in theater these days.

So, there I was, a new but proficient primary training instructor on an end of block instrument hop. My student was performing to his usual above average ability as we neared the end of the first leg of an out and in flight.

Having stepped to the aircraft later than planned, I began contemplating ways to adjust our stop-over and second leg to home base on planned timing and prior to field closure. I decided a shorter stop-over would be beneficial and thought to give the fixed base operator a call on VHF so there would be a minimal delay in getting fuel/service. Having just requested an opposite direction ap-

proach, I knew we were in for a series of long vectors to deconflict us with the arriving and departing traffic. I decided this was the time to give those on the ground an additional “heads up.”

I asked the student to monitor approach control on UHF closely as I was going to make a call. I selected the fixed base operator frequency in the VHF radio and reported 15 minutes out. I then spontaneously decided to give our transportation, a friend stationed nearby, a phone call to ensure he would meet us upon landing.

With speaker selected on my cell phone, and with the hope he'd be able to hear over aircraft noise, I relayed (yelled) our estimated time of landing. Shortly thereafter, we found ourselves on an extended base leg and received clearance to execute the approach and circle to the landing runway in the predicted time.

Not for weeks later, until it was brought to my attention in a student critique, did I give the flight another thought. With a Monday morning quarterback attitude, I found myself thinking about and reflecting on the series of events that materialized. Without intent, I violated Navy and Air Force instructions that specifically prohibit cellular telephone operation in Naval and Air Force aircraft.

Worse than that, I placed a young, impressionable student aviator in a compromising position. With the student “under the hood” and not up VHF, he did not fully realize the actuality of the events that transpired. I commended him for his integrity and am comforted in knowing he will be an asset to the Naval aviation community. I, however, made myself a liability to my squadron and failed to demonstrate adherence to applicable regulations and sound, professional aviation judgment.

So where do we go from here?

I remember hearing a veteran pilot say the phrase, “There are those who have and those who will,” with regard to aviation buffoonery. I'm skeptical of the pessimism. With proper education, whether it be safety briefs, resource/risk management training, or word of mouth, perhaps we can prevent others from making the same or similar mistakes.

Those of us in training commands are obligated to perform at a high level and in a professional manner. The student aviators expect and deserve nothing less than honest, skillful, safe instructors who instill and exhibit sound judgment.

I agree with the quote by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: “That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” Because after lengthy reflection, I have identified my mistakes and will be increasingly cognizant of my behavior and examples I set for students. It served as an opportunity to re-cage. Fly safe!



by Tech. Sgt. Matthew Hansen

It took a student's critique for an experienced instructor pilot to realize he'd made a big mistake by using a cell phone during a T-34 training flight.

“I remember hearing a veteran pilot say the phrase, ‘There are those who have and those who will,’ with regard to aviation buffoonery. I’m skeptical of the pessimism.”

AVERTING A 'CRASH COURSE'



by Senior Airman Kerry Solan-Johnson

After a close call, First Lt. Michael Seltzer stands with the jet that malfunctioned at the end of a mission he flew recently over Iraq. Seltzer is an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot assigned to the 421st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Two green lights staring down 1st Lt. Michael Seltzer posed a problem.

A third light, which remained dark, indicated trouble: The landing gear at the nose of the lieutenant's F-16 Fighting Falcon was not down and locked into place.

Low on fuel after a five-hour mission over Iraq and flying hot — armed with two bombs — Seltzer did not have a lot of options.

"That's when I began to realize it just wasn't my day," said Seltzer, a 421st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot.

The 25-year-old Berkeley, Calif., native ran the checklists for this kind of situation, to no avail.

Lt. Col. Mark Cline, the flight lead for the two-ship formation, now tailed Seltzer as they circled the skies between Baghdad and Balad, hoping for a windfall.

The lieutenant then made an emergency call for a fuel tanker, which would afford him time and options. As luck would have it, a tanker was already in the air and offered to refuel the F-16s.

Typically, every pound of fuel on a tanker is spoken for, but that day, by chance, the tanker could afford to refuel the two fighters. The refueling bought Seltzer the time he needed to jettison the bombs over Lake TharThar, the largest lake in Southwest Asia and about 65 miles west of Balad.

At this time, a representative from Lockheed Martin in Forth Worth, Texas, was put on the line with Seltzer. They worked through possible fixes to drop the nose gear as the two-ship formation made its way to Lake TharThar.

It was over the lake that Seltzer ran into his second problem: The bomb under his right wing "hung" and would not jettison.

"I thought Murphy's Law was in full gear," said Cline, 421st EFS commander.

Seltzer, deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, began to consider the possibility he might have to eject

"Here that presents a whole other set of problems," the lieutenant said.

After 20 minutes of burning fuel and failed attempts to shed the munition, the lieutenant knew it was time to face the inevitable, and the two F-16s turned home.

"I was concerned about him landing and the nose gear collapsing — especially with the live munition," Cline said. "I prayed that God would get the nose gear down."

As they approached the runway, the flying supervisor in the air control tower told Cline to "back off" from Seltzer's jet as he landed because of the hung munition.

"The adrenaline was pumping when I was ready to land," Seltzer said. "I knew my landing had to be perfect — this had the potential to be bad."

And that is when the pilots believed their prayers were answered.

The hydraulic sequence valve, which caused the problem with the nose gear, suddenly functioned correctly, locking the nose gear into place and turning the third green light on.

Maintenance crews later determined that if Seltzer had landed with the gear stuck, it would have collapsed. Faulty release charges were to blame for the hung munition. Seltzer said he was thankful for the tanker crew, which he believes prevented him from possibly crashing.

"Whatever happened to make the landing gear finally extend happened in that extra hour the tanker bought me," he said.

— Senior Airman Kerry Solan-Johnson
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

TARGET FIXATION CONTRIBUTES TO FIGHTER JET CRASH, PILOT DEATH

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFNEWS) — Air Force officials recently completed an investigation of the F-16C Fighting Falcon accident 20 miles northwest of Baghdad Nov. 27, which resulted in the death of the pilot, Maj. Troy Gilbert.

The official cause of the accident was Gilbert's "channeled attention manifested by his desire to maintain a constant visual positive identification of targeted enemy vehicles and subsequent target fixation on these vehicles while they were traveling at a high rate of speed," the report said. These two factors, when combined, caused Gilbert "to begin, and then press his attack below a recoverable altitude."

On April 2, Brig. Gen. David L. Goldfein, commander of the 49th Fighter Wing, Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., and president of the accident investigation board, said Gilbert was fully qualified, fully focused and well rested prior to taking part in his final sortie.

The sortie began as a non-traditional intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, or NTISR mission, where pilots use targeting pods and visual means to find, track and potentially target threats to coalition ground troops.

At that point, Gilbert found the situation turning from "benign" to "very intense" in a matter of minutes, Goldfein said.

According to the accident investigation board report released April 2 by Air Combat Command, Gilbert led a flight of two F-16s in an aerial combat mission near Taji, Iraq. On the ground, insurgents were unleashing truck-mounted heavy machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, small arms fire and mortars to attack coalition troops. In addition, a downed Army helicopter crew was in danger of being overrun.

Gilbert quickly transitioned his peacetime training to his war-time environment.

"I found no fault with his adjustment of the mission plan," Goldfein said.

The report said Gilbert engaged the insurgents, launching a strafing attack against enemy vehicles, striking a truck with the F-16's 20-millimeter Gatling gun.

Gilbert then conducted a second strafing pass from an extremely low altitude that was not recoverable, impacting the ground. He



An F-16 Fighting Falcon, similar to the one in this photo, crashed near Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 27, destroying the aircraft and killing the pilot.

died immediately on impact. Operating in a dynamic and stressful environment, Gilbert's motivation to succeed saved the lives of the helicopter crew and other coalition ground forces, Goldfein said.

"(Fighter pilots) train to a very strict standard in peacetime in terms of how we execute various attacks, and then we adjust from that point when we get into combat to accomplish the mission," he said. "(Major Gilbert) was operating in a very dynamic environment and responding to the requirement to maintain 100 percent positive identification on a very, very difficult target to acquire."

According to a vignette in the Air Force's Portraits in Courage, Gilbert, a 12-year Air Force veteran, had already completed 21 combat sorties in the F-16 supporting ground forces under enemy fire. On one mission, he found and identified anti-Iraqi forces, then passed critical targeting information to coalition forces, who attacked and eliminated the threat. In another time-sensitive mission, he destroyed 10 insurgents concealed in a palm grove with the pinpoint delivery of a laser-guided weapon.

Gilbert, who was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor, deployed in September 2006 from Luke AFB, Ariz., to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, Balad Air Base, Iraq. He was assigned as the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group chief of standardization and evaluation. On the day of the accident, he was flying with the 524th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

The aircraft was assigned to the 524th EFS deployed from Cannon AFB, N.M. The aircraft was destroyed on impact.

NIGHT VISION GOGGLE

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTOR TRAINING DEBUTS AT RANDOLPH

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Randolph set a new training milestone Jan. 29 as it began its first Air Force Night Vision Goggle Academic Instructor Course.

The course, which is one and a half days, is aimed at teaching Airmen already familiar with NVGs (such as pilots, navigators, loadmasters, engineers, flight surgeons, etc.) more advanced instruction that they can take with them to their respective units and train others.

"NVGs are dangerous if you don't know how to properly adjust and focus them to

obtain maximum visual performance," said Capt. Mike Boyer, a rated course instructor. "We want to (ensure) everyone who comes through this course is fully confident and can share their knowledge with others."

— Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice
12th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

In the "nite lab," Capt. Tom Massa, Air Force Night Vision Goggle Academic Instructor Course director, adjusts the lighting on the terrain board (a scale model of desert mountain urban environments) to demonstrate the effects of shadows, illumination and contrast on NVG visual performance.



By Capt. Alex Ramos



HH-60 Pavehawk

MISSION FIRST, SAFETY FIRST...

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is the challenge!*

— Lt. Col. Sean McGlynn
AETC Flight Safety Division

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