

# Air Education and Training Command's **TORCH**



July/August 2010

**AFGHANISTAN  
AVALANCHE**  
Air Force rescuers save lives  
PAGE 22



## A Narrow Escape

*Power  
parachutist  
nearly drowns  
after crashing  
into ocean*

### **UNDER A GUNMAN'S GAZE**

How sergeant turned into ultimate wingman after facing deranged killer

PAGE 8

### **OFF BY A DIGIT**

Major severs ring finger during C-17 mission in Rwanda

PAGE 12

### **RESCUE LESSONS LEARNED**

Some helpful tips when involved in a water emergency

PAGE 20

Page 16

“When you get it right, mighty beasts float up into the sky.  
When you get it wrong, people die.”

— Roger Bacon  
Philosopher and scientist



**TORCH** 

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### 8 Under a Gunman's Gaze

Gen. Stephen R. Lorenz, commander of Air Education and Training Command, discusses a recent shooting spree in Wichita Falls, Texas, in which two Airmen from Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, were shot. He takes a look at how another Airman turned into the ultimate wingman after facing the deranged killer.



### 12 Off by a Digit

On New Year's Day of 2009, a C-17 pilot departed Travis Air Force Base, Calif., en route to Rwanda's capital city, Kigali. His mission? To pick up cargo to transport to war-torn Darfur, Sudan, in support of U.N. peacekeeping efforts. Unfortunately, he wouldn't leave the African continent with all of his body parts intact.

### 16 A Narrow Escape

COVER STORY

When a power parachutist crashes his aircraft into the Gulf of Mexico off the shores of Galveston, Texas, he gets trapped under water. Rescuers are in a fight against time to save him from drowning.

### 20 Rescue Lessons Learned

Beery Miller, who helped save a man from drowning, provides some tips that will come in handy should you ever have to make a water rescue.

### TORCH TALK 2

Readers discuss amputees, driving drunk, a freak death from a tire explosion, lightning strikes, plane killing jogger and more.

### AROUND THE COMMAND 4

Don't Feed the Bad Things: Chief learns valuable life lessons when he's caught in the middle of a shark feeding frenzy.

### TALES OF THE STRANGE 6

Big Bug Goes Ballistic: Insect distracts missile driver, who crashes 18-wheeler ... The Dirty Half-dozen: Top six causes of vehicle mishaps.



### THE ALERT CONSUMER 7

Famous Last Words: Watch out for anti-safety slogans.

### HANGAR FLYING 22

Afghanistan Avalanche: Air Force rescuers save lives.

### CLEAR THE RUNWAY 24

Flying Dolphins? Altus Airmen haul unique cargo in C-17 ... C-130 crew handles unusual in-flight emergency in Iraq ... Multiple errors lead to C-21A mishap.



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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Col. JOHN W. BLUMENTRITT  
*AETC director of safety*

# The Black Bean

In the spring of 1843, following a botched invasion of Mexico by a band of Texans, Mexican dictator Santa Ana ordered that 10 percent of those captured be executed. To determine which of the 176 prisoners would die, a container was filled with 159 white beans and 17 black ones.

The 17 unlucky men who drew a black bean were shot by firing squad.

In 2007, with nearly 244.2 million motor vehicles on American roads, 2,491,000 people were injured in vehicle mishaps. Statistically speaking, that means those injured departed for their destination with a 90 percent probability of arriving safely and only a 10 percent chance of tragedy. However, like the 17 doomed Texans in Mexico 164 years prior, these near-2.5 million injured men and women, in essence, drew a proverbial black bean.

So did those Texas soldiers in 1843, and the motorists driving on American highways in 2007, all have a random 10 percent chance of suffering an ill fate?

No. In both cases, variables impacted the outcome, spelling doom for some and enhancing the likelihood of a happy ending for others.

In the black bean example for instance, legend has it that in an effort to target captured officers, the Mexican commander placed the black beans on top of the white ones and made these leaders draw first. But it's said that some of the Texans uncovered this treachery. Also, one observant prisoner by the name of William "Big Foot" Wallace figured out that the black beans were slightly larger than the white ones.

**"A recent study revealed that nearly 80 percent of vehicle crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event. That makes driver inattention the most common way to end up 'black-beaned' on the street."**

While historians may never know for sure what exactly took place, legend suggests that whispers of "dig deep boys" and advice to "feel" past the black beans permeated throughout the group. Consequently, attentive Texans who heard and heeded these safety messages would have improved their chances of avoiding a firing squad.

Similar to the black bean episode more than a century and a half earlier, variables could have affected the outcome for the injured motorists as well.

Motorists who drive drunk, speed, street race, engage in road rage, don't get enough sleep or succumb to distractions, such as texting or scenery gawking, increase the likelihood that they will end up in that unwanted 10 percent who get injured in a mishap.

As a matter of fact, a recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study revealed that nearly 80 percent of vehicle crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event. That makes driver inattention the most common way to end up "black-beaned" on the street.

So, much like some of the Texans who found ways to increase their odds of survival, you can do the same.

The magazine you hold in your hands, much like the warning whispers of Big Foot Wallace, is blaring safety messages to you right now. Heed the warnings! Avoid risky environments! Remain attentive! Make good choices!

In other words, don't select a black bean ...

*John W. Blumentritt*

# INSPIRING AND HEARTWARMING

I just read the article "Out on a Limb" (cover story, May/June 2010 issue of Torch) on-line. Kudos to 1st Lt. Ryan McGuire for overcoming the devastation of losing his lower right leg and doing so well at the Warrior Games so soon after his injury. It's gotta be tough for a 24-year-old man with his whole life ahead of him to lose a limb, but it's inspiring and heartwarming to witness

his determination to overcome his disability and never-say-die attitude when it comes to realizing his dream of being an Air Force pilot. Good luck to him; it sounds like he'll make a fine pilot.

*Al Saunders  
Via e-mail*



## TOO HIGH A PRICE

Regarding 1st Lt. Ryan McGuire ("Out on a Limb," May/June 2010 cover story), it's always sad when someone so young makes a mistake that costs him for the rest of his life. Great story, but too bad so many young people have to learn the hard way. Losing a limb is too high a price to pay for one

careless moment in time. The young always feel bulletproof — I'll bet he wasn't wearing a lifejacket at the time either.

*Terrance Clark  
Via e-mail*

**According to mishap investigators, the lieutenant was wearing a life vest at the time of the mishap.**

## AN UNBEARABLE TALE

Your story "Freak Accident Kills Captain" (May/June 2010 issue, page 6) is simply heartbreaking. First she (Capt. Jenna Wilcox) survives a deployment to Afghanistan. Then, she is taken out by an exploding tire on a vacation shortly after returning from duty in that war-torn country. This must be unbearable for her family. "Jenna's Blog" (on the same page) is both sad and eerie, especially her final line that said: "This will be my last entry. Both Scott and I are home, safe and sound."

*Capt. Felicia Ryan  
Army Reserve*



### LETTERS TO TORCH

Have a comment or complaint? Letters to Torch may be sent via e-mail to: [torch.magazine@randolph.af.mil](mailto: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.



# LIGHTNING STRIKES

I really enjoyed your articles on the lightning strikes ("Lightning in a Bottle" and "Bolt from Above," March/April 2010 issue, cover stories). All of the victims appear to have been very lucky. I had a neighbor several years back who was struck by lightning while hiking in the mountains, and he wasn't so fortunate. He died alone and wasn't found until a day or two later. He left behind a wife and three young boys. Hopefully, your articles will help raise awareness, and people will seek cover during thunderstorms.

*Retired Master Sgt. John Santiago  
Denver*



by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bender

## HOW ABOUT **OPTION B?**

Interesting story on the aircraft that killed the jogger who was running on the beach (“Plane Kills Jogger,” March/April 2010 issue, page 6). It seems to me that it would have been safer for the pilot to land his disabled aircraft in the water just off the shore ... certainly it would have been better for the unfortunate jogger.

Gus Trammell  
Via e-mail

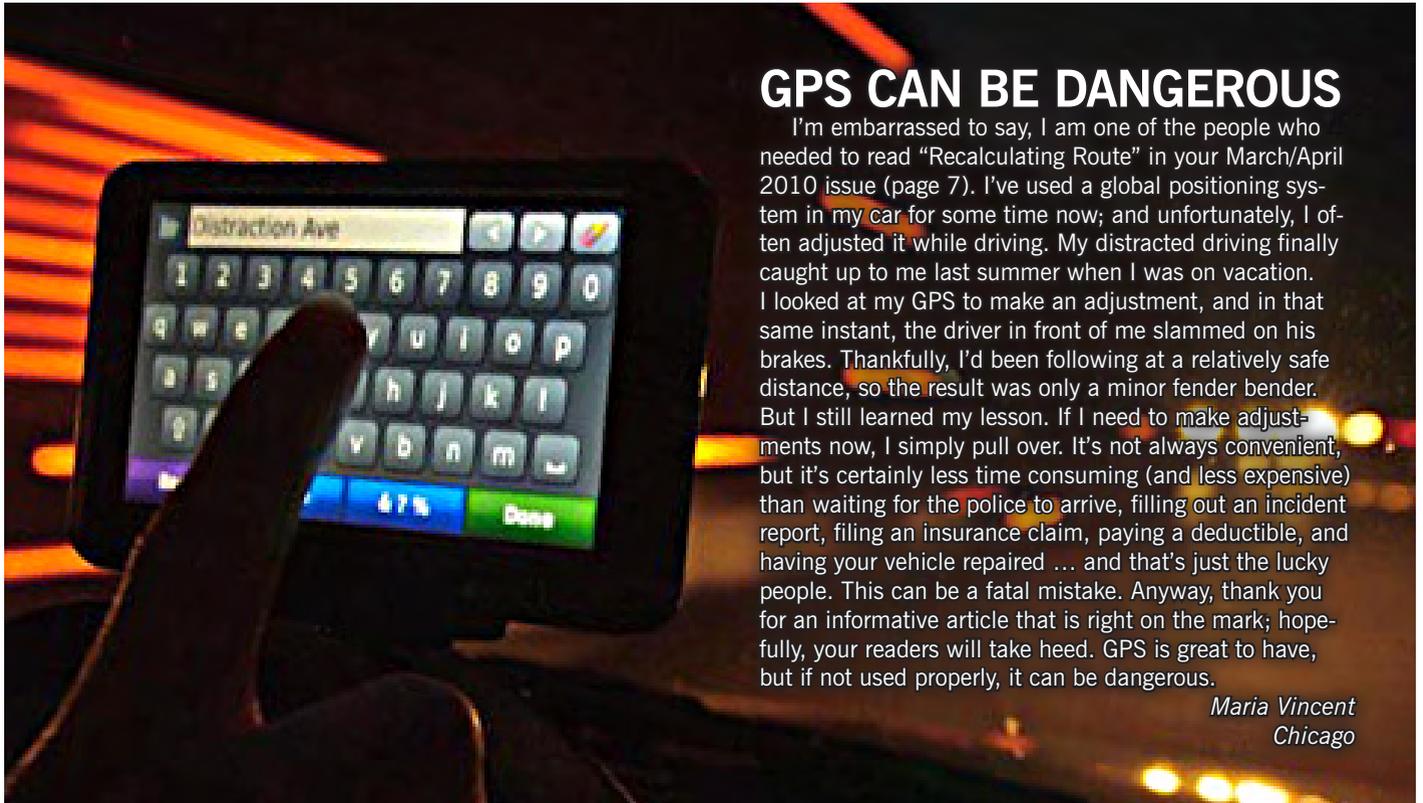


By Sammie W. King

## GPS CAN BE DANGEROUS

I'm embarrassed to say, I am one of the people who needed to read “Recalculating Route” in your March/April 2010 issue (page 7). I've used a global positioning system in my car for some time now; and unfortunately, I often adjusted it while driving. My distracted driving finally caught up to me last summer when I was on vacation. I looked at my GPS to make an adjustment, and in that same instant, the driver in front of me slammed on his brakes. Thankfully, I'd been following at a relatively safe distance, so the result was only a minor fender bender. But I still learned my lesson. If I need to make adjustments now, I simply pull over. It's not always convenient, but it's certainly less time consuming (and less expensive) than waiting for the police to arrive, filling out an incident report, filing an insurance claim, paying a deductible, and having your vehicle repaired ... and that's just the lucky people. This can be a fatal mistake. Anyway, thank you for an informative article that is right on the mark; hopefully, your readers will take heed. GPS is great to have, but if not used properly, it can be dangerous.

Maria Vincent  
Chicago



## WHAT A **CATCH**

What an amazing story on Cary Clevenger and Cannon Jamison (“The Catch,” January/February 2010 issue, page 14). I can't believe Cary, a smallish 14-year-old, was able to catch a 2-year-old who fell from a second-story window. Many full-grown men wouldn't have been able to make that catch under the same

circumstances. It really was a great save, and Cary is definitely a hero. Now that's what you call a wingman!

Staff Sgt. L.P. Porter  
Air National Guard

## 'POSTERIZE' IT

My undergraduate pilot training classmates and I were thinking of gift ideas to give our unit, the 86th Flying Training Squadron, as a show of our appreciation for all the hard work they put in. We really liked the aerial picture of the T-1 Jayhawk in the 2008 Torch Calendar (under the month of April). Is there any problem if we printed a poster-size copy and framed it for the squadron?

Capt. Carlos Nivia  
Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas

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By Tech. Sgt. Matthew Hammen

# Don't Feed the

## Chief learns valuable life lessons when he's cau

By Chief Master Sgt. **M. KENUI BALUTSKI**  
Photo by Master Sgt. **JEREMY T. LOCK**

I nervously stood on a thin slice of coral reef, surrounded by sharks.

Stranded only 100 yards from the friendly sands of Midway Island, I just couldn't force myself back into the water to swim to shore. With nightfall approaching, the tide steadily rising, and hungry man-eaters lurking everywhere, my survival options were rapidly disappearing.

It was the fall of 1982, and I was working for a Hawaii-based construction company on Midway Naval Air Station in the North Pacific. I had been there for a couple of months and was very familiar with the island and its surrounding waters.

One day after work, I went snorkeling with my friend Donny Callaway and the base physician, Doc Boone. It was nearly 5 p.m.; and although there were only a few hours of sunlight left, we eagerly hit the surf.

After diving for 30 minutes near Midway's first barrier-reef, my compatriots

signaled that they wanted to head out toward the second reef to look around.

For a 19-year-old kid from Hawaii, Midway's off-shore was like a seafood amusement park. The waters were teeming with gigantic schools of fish, and I couldn't believe how easy it was to string-up a bunch of trophies in no time flat.

Unfortunately, my good luck disintegrated after I fed a few "non-keepers" to some baby sharks swimming nearby. In rapid succession, that boneheaded move snowballed into a dangerous situation.

Two more reef sharks appeared and made high-speed passes at my string of fish. Then out of nowhere, a lightning-fast attacker ripped into my stringer, leaving a tethered fish-head in its wake.

I speared more fish and fed them to the

newly-arrived sharks thinking they would simply go away with the food.

No such luck.

That only lured in more freeloaders. One of the newly-arrived sharks was pretty big, somewhere near 7 or 8 feet long, and he wasn't the least bit intimidated by me or my spear.

After his impressive fly-by, my composure completely unraveled. My heart-rate went through the roof, and my breathing became rapid as I came to a horrifying realization.

I couldn't physically account for all the sharks in the water.

Thanks to the big shark, I was now broadcasting amplified distress signals to every other predator in the neighbor-

hood and the water deepened, I'd be on the appetizer list once again. I prayed for an assault raft full of heavily-armed Navy SEALs. But I would've settled for Chuck Norris in a dinghy with a butter-knife.

Unfortunately, my feet still stood 12 inches below sea-level, and a rescue party was nowhere to be found. Regardless, this "prey" kept on praying.

Then hope emerged on the beach in the form of Donny and Doc.

I hollered at them to bring a boat. They could see me and hear me yelling, but they couldn't understand what I was saying. They only knew that I was in trouble.

Without hesitation Donny jumped back into the water and started swimming out toward me ... straight into the shark

pep-rally I started earlier. Although I protested as loudly as I could, Donny just kept swimming full speed ahead.

When he was about 50 feet from me, he started punching at the water to scare the sharks away so he could get to the reef. First thing he did was ask me if

**"Some of the sharks tried to get up on the reef to turn me into an afternoon snack. It was like a surreal horror movie. I felt my heart pounding out the 'Jaws' theme as razor-toothed hunters zigzagged around me."**

— Chief Master Sgt. M. Kenui Balutski

I was bleeding or if I'd been bitten. He said that the entire area was chock-full of sharks and that we'd need to start swimming to shore in a back-to-back configuration before it got any darker.

I asked if he saw "the big one," and his eyes widened as he asked for specifics. I told him about the potential nightmare lurking nearby just seconds before we began the scariest swim of our lives.

On the way in we chased off a bunch of the little sharks and kept the medium ones at bay with a few pokes of the spear. Thankfully, the big one never reappeared.

Eventually, Donny and I stumbled onto the shore just as the sun dipped below the horizon as if on a timer.

We were safe at home and permanently off the menu.



# Bad Things

ght in middle of shark feeding frenzy

I learned valuable lessons about the consequences of my actions that day. Feeding bad things, whether physical or metaphorical, could ultimately destroy my life. That day I fed real sharks that could literally chew me to pieces.

For many years I also nourished metaphorical sharks that could also destroy my personal and professional life just the same. By feeding things like anger, pride, selfishness, apathy and irresponsibility, I fueled the feeding frenzy of bad things in my life.

Although many allegorical sharks sidetracked me during the early years of my Air Force career, I finally uncovered an effective repellent. As I fed good things and ran from bad things, I realized that my career and personal life progressed exponentially.

By nourishing activities that led to self improvement, healthy relationships, honor, duty, service and other positive outcomes, I could starve the things that once ruined me and simultaneously drive other bad things away.

At first I purposefully distanced myself from bad habits and bad people until my shark population dwindled down to a manageable level. Then I realized that dire circumstances, regardless of how desperate they seemed, were never really hopeless when I had family, faith and friends to call on.

Over the years I've found competent wingmen who kept me accountable and helped me maintain focus on my core values and beliefs. Sometimes I felt I needed Chuck Norris around (since sharks get into protective cages whenever Chuck Norris goes swimming). But in actuality, all I needed was a wingman who would either swim through shark-infested waters with me or help me avoid bad situations altogether.

Bottom line: Feed the good things, starve the bad ... and remember to keep your wingman close.

---

Chief Balutski is the command chief for the 71st Flying Training Wing at Vance Air Force Base, Okla.



**When a man went snorkeling and fed some sharks,** he started a feeding-frenzy that threatened to make him the main course.

digital composite by  
David M. Stack

# BIG BUG GOES BALLISTIC

## INSECT DISTRACTS MISSILE DRIVER, WHO CRASHES 18-WHEELER

If it were a screenplay, the scene might read something like this: Camera long shot of military truck driver cruising along a rural road in an 18-wheeler carrying intercontinental ballistic missile components. Buzzing bug flies into scene; camera follows. Close-up of huge, hideous insect landing on driver's back. Close-up of driver's frantic face. Medium shot of driver's arms flailing to swat the bug. Long shot of driver losing control of truck and flipping it on its side. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

According to an Air Force Space Command accident investigation board report recently released, that scene pretty much happened late last summer.

Investigators said driver error caused a payload transporter vehicle carrying non-nuclear ICBM components to overturn in a rural area near Minot Air Force Base, N.D. The board determined that the driver became distracted and failed to maintain control of the vehicle when a large insect flew into the truck's open window and landed on the driver's back. The report said no additional factors contributed to the cause of the mishap.

The vehicle drifted to the right side of the gravel road while the driver tried to remove the insect, and the tractor trailer's tires

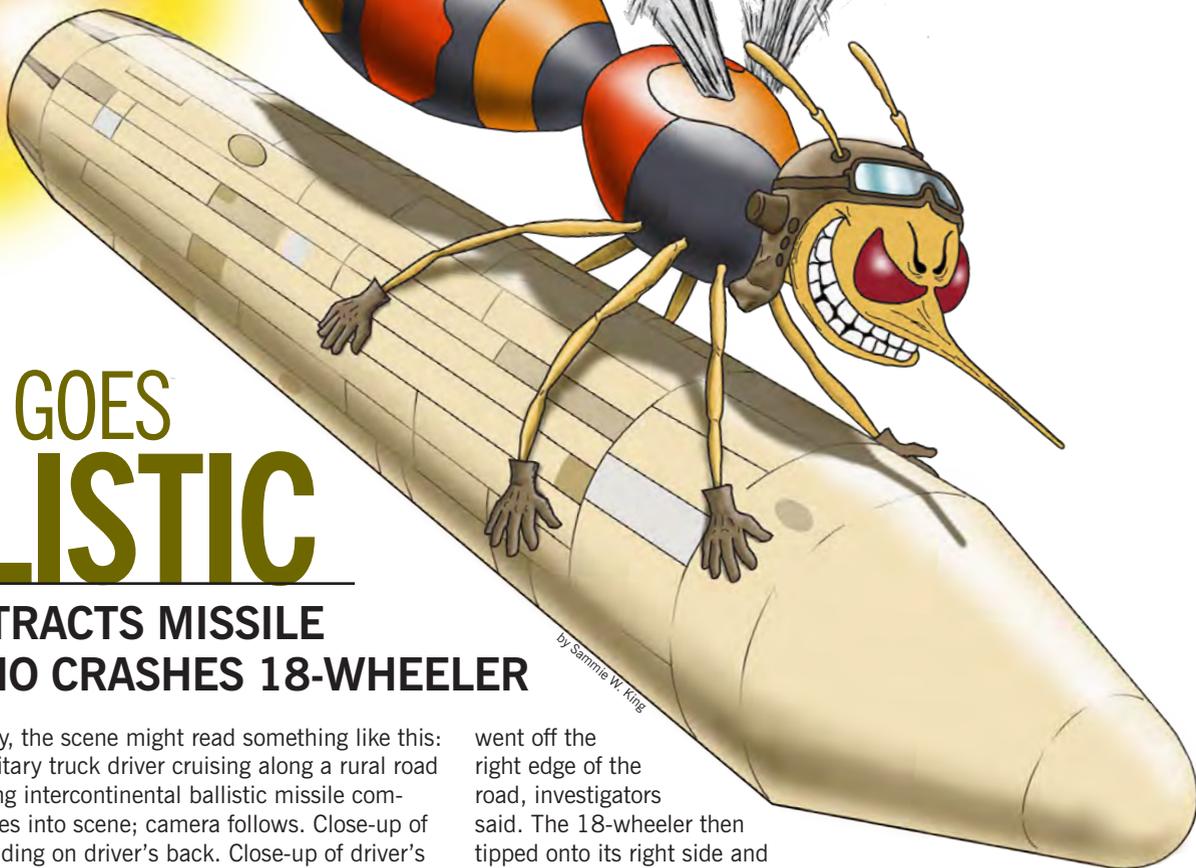
went off the right edge of the road, investigators said. The 18-wheeler then tipped onto its right side and came to rest in the ditch next to a hayfield.

There were no injuries, and the accident posed no danger to the public, investigators said.

Recovery costs and damage to the vehicle and its cargo, both assigned to the 91st Missile Wing at Minot, added up to nearly \$200,000, according to the mishap report.

"Studies show that distracted driving is the leading cause of vehicle mishaps," said Master Sgt. Scotty Johns, a ground safety expert with the Air Education and Training Command Safety Directorate. "Whether it's a cell phone, playing with the radio or, as in the Minot incident, a big bug, you should try to eliminate distractions and stay focused when behind the wheel. Pull over and eliminate the distraction. A two-second delay before 'swatting the bug' just might save your life."

— Tim Barela



by Sammie W. King

## THE DIRTY HALF-DOZEN TOP SIX CAUSES OF VEHICLE MISHAPS

- |  |   |                                    |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> <i>Distracted driving</i>                     | <b>3</b> <i>Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs</i> | <b>5</b> <i>Aggressive driving</i> |
| <b>2</b> <i>Fatigue or falling asleep at the wheel</i> | <b>4</b> <i>Speeding</i>  | <b>6</b> <i>Inclement weather</i>  |

— National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

# FAMOUS LAST WORDS

## WATCH OUT FOR ANTI-SAFETY SLOGANS

Companies spend billions of dollars every year coming up with catchy slogans in an attempt to sell more products. In the safety world, slogans such as “Click It or Ticket” or “Don’t Become a Statistic” are used to influence behavior.

But in the battle between “good and evil,” there are also many anti-safety slogans or phrases to watch out for and avoid.

Here are some sentences that can be traced to the beginning of many a mishap.

### “I can top that.”

This quote is often heard when the speaker is surrounded by many close friends, family members or others he may be trying to impress. Many times, “that” doesn’t end very well. Instead of applying risk management, our “hero” is focused on showing off. Case in point, some years back an Airman was at a squadron picnic and did a back flip, landing headfirst into 18 inches of water — a victory dip following a volleyball game. He was permanently paralyzed from the shoulders down.

### “Hold my beer, and watch this.”

Can anything good happen after this sentence? In recent issues Torch has published two articles that are perfect examples of this anti-safety slogan. In the first, an Airman asks his brother to hold his beer while he shoots at a street sign. The bullet ricochets off of a metal pole and strikes the Airman in the leg. In the second instance, a man asks his girlfriend to hold his beer while he sticks a rattlesnake in his mouth. He nearly lost his life when the viper sank its fangs into his tongue. Alcohol is known to decrease inhibitions and allows for a false-sense of security. The next time your wingman asks someone to hold his beer so he can try something, call a knock-it off.

### “It will never happen to me.”

How many times does this saying have to be proven wrong before people stop believing it? Just last issue, Torch printed two articles on five Airmen who were struck by lightning in two separate incidents. Are lightning strikes that common? No. Should you tempt fate during a thunderstorm? No. The thing is, you might edge your lawn 100 times without safety glasses and suffer no consequences, but it’ll be the 101st time when it comes back to haunt you. Same with not wearing a seat belt or a motorcycle helmet ... or not taking cover during a thunderstorm. The “it will never happen to me” attitude is one that especially affects the young who tend to feel invincible.

### “That’s the way I’ve always done it.”

This gibe, depending on verb tense, is used both before and after an accident. If it is said prior to an accident, then this is usually a sign the person was overconfident in their abilities and likely had gotten complacent. After a mishap, chances are the accident investigator will hear, “I don’t know what went wrong; I’ve done this task a million times.” That’s probably what the Airman who tried to slip through a hangar door without the proper clearance thought just before he got crushed to death. He’d gone through that same hangar door with that same unauthorized clearance plenty of times without incident, but it only took that ONE time.

All of these anti-safety slogans highlight the need for risk management and the wingman concept in our everyday lives. When these counter-intuitive words are spoken, there are typically several people present. Any one of these wingmen could call a knock-it-off and possibly prevent a tragedy from occurring. So, the next time you hear one of these comments, or any variation of them, be a good wingman and pull the offender aside to apply the appropriate level of risk management.

— Robbie Bogard  
Air Education and  
Training Command  
Ground Safety Division

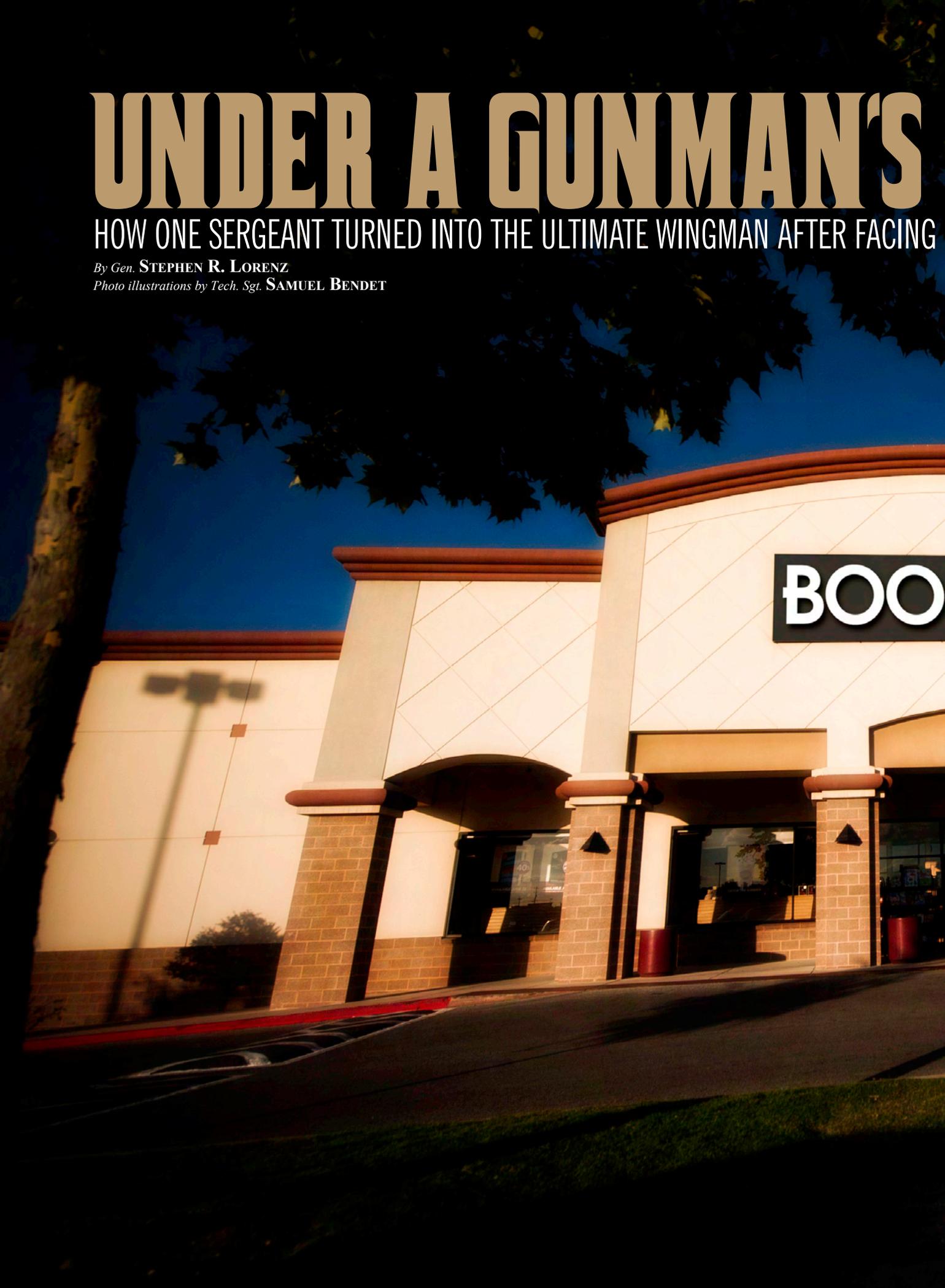


# UNDER A GUNMAN'S

HOW ONE SERGEANT TURNED INTO THE ULTIMATE WINGMAN AFTER FACING

By Gen. **STEPHEN R. LORENZ**

Photo illustrations by Tech. Sgt. **SAMUEL BENDET**



**BOO**

# GAZE

A DERANGED KILLER

BOOK STORE

8336

GOOD

BOOK

8340



**O**n April 20, a 22-year-old man with a history of violence walked into a bookstore in Wichita Falls, Texas, and started shooting. He wounded four women, then drove to a bar and killed an employee outside before he drove home and took his own life.

This tragedy sounds like so many we hear about on the news each and every night. We've almost become desensitized to the horror and emotional aftermath, but this type of violence is something we cannot ignore — especially this event in Wichita Falls. You see, this time it wasn't just a news headline. It was an event that touched our Air Force family directly.

Wichita Falls is home to Sheppard Air Force Base and much of our Air Force's technical training. This particular bookstore offers a quiet environment that provides a peaceful and relaxing place to browse bestsellers ... and for some of the Airmen going through training, a quiet place to do some evening studying.

On that April night, three staff sergeants sat in that very store reviewing study materials for an exam the next morning. Two were former security forces members and the third a former F-16 crew chief. They were all on temporary duty to Sheppard to cross-train into the medical field. These Airmen were three of our best, and competed against thousands just for the chance to transition into aerospace medicine.

That evening, the silence of their exam preparation was shattered by a man with a shotgun who barged into the bookstore yelling derogatory racial remarks.

His words shocked them, and the shooting that followed terrified everyone. They scattered and tried to protect themselves. It happened quickly; although the moment would be frozen forever in their minds.

Then, as suddenly as it began, the gunman was gone. The bookstore's peaceful silence, however, would not return.

Four people had been shot, and two of them were Jade Henderson and Deondra Sauls, our staff sergeants. Police and emergency medical personnel were on the scene within minutes. Both sergeants were transported to a local emergency room, and later to Dallas' Parkland Memorial Hospital for care. Thankfully, although their wounds were severe, Jade and Deondra will recover and return to training.

This is where the story ends for the local news media, but there are actually many lessons that can be learned from this horrific tragedy.

Although not wounded in the shooting, the third Airman, Staff Sgt. Tanya "Taye" Jesser, avoided the gunfire by hiding under a desk near the shooter's feet. She watched his car drive away and yelled to the other victims that the gunman was gone. She was one of those who had the presence of mind to call 9-1-1, provide a description of the gunman and request ambulances for the wounded.

Sergeant Jesser then followed the screams to different parts of the bookstore and provided care. She directed first responders to the wounded while applying pressure to slow the bleeding from one of her fellow Airmen. After emergency medical personnel were caring for the wounded, she contacted family members, reassuring them that everything would be all right. Sergeant Jesser called a fellow student not at the scene and asked for help contacting Sheppard AFB, the security forces and her first sergeant. After filing her report with the authorities, she gathered the personal belongings of her classmates and traveled to the local emergency room.

The sergeant didn't get back to her room that evening until almost 3 a.m. She woke before the sun and was in class on time at 7:15 a.m. Despite her lack of sleep and all that she had just been through, she took the exam as scheduled.

Sergeant Jesser scored a 94 percent on the test.

The next day I flew up to Dallas to see our injured staff sergeants at Parkland Memorial Hospital. I wanted to make sure they understood the Air Force family stood with them. Although Sergeant Henderson was in surgery, I was able to see Sergeant Sauls. I asked her if there was anything that I could do — whether it was help notify friends, get family members situated nearby or even assist with medical issues.

Sergeant Sauls looked me square in the eyes and said, "Sir,

## A HERO'S PERSPECTIVE ON BEING A GOOD WINGMAN

You never know how you are going to react in an emergency situation, but training and keeping a cool head are key, says Staff Sgt. Tanya Jesser, an aerospace medical apprentice student from the 383rd Training Squadron at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. Jesser went into wingman mode following the April 20 shooting in Wichita Falls, Texas.

"People were still in shock (after the shooting)," she said. "My (injured) co-workers needed me."

So Jesser sprang into action by taking control of the scene, calling 9-1-1 and providing first aid.

"After the gunman left, I got up from where I was hiding," she said. "I wasn't going to go crazy; I was going to stay calm so everyone else would. (Being a good wingman) is just doing what needs to be done to help out and not being an obstacle."



*After seeing her friends shot, Staff Sgt. Tanya "Taye" Jesser sprang into action to help save their lives.*

**"The silence of their exam preparation was shattered by a man with a shotgun who barged into the bookstore yelling derogatory racial remarks."**

don't let them take my training slot. I don't want to lose it."

I was really touched.

With everything that she'd been through, Sergeant Sauls was most concerned about her future in the Air Force.

These three Airmen were among the many heroes of the evening. Jade and Deondra were worried about their classmates and their ability to complete training. Taye acted with a determined professionalism that facilitated immediate care and added stability to a horrific tragedy.

When we talk about a wingman culture, these three Airmen personify such an ideal. They were concerned for others. ...

They were selfless.

The lives of many were forever changed that evening. It's not only the individuals who were directly attacked; it's their friends and families too. In this disaster, it doesn't stop with the wounded. You see, the shooter also killed one individual that evening — even more tragic for his family and friends. The man killed was an Army veteran and the son of one of our civilian employees at Sheppard AFB. Witnesses that evening said that his actions may have saved the lives of others. He had his whole life ahead of him. ...

No matter how hard we try to avoid or prevent it, this type of violence can occur at any time in almost any location. We must all do what we can to stay aware of how our family members and friends are doing. Look for times when they need a little more support or encouragement. Be there for them — even when they don't think they need you.

There are many heroes at Sheppard AFB and the surrounding community currently supporting those affected by this tragedy. Being a good wingman is something all of us need to try to do each and every day. Knowing that you'll be there for others should give you the comfort knowing that others will be there for you — whether you think you need them or not. ✈



# OFF BY A DIGIT

Major severs ring finger during mission in Rwanda

*Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. SAMUEL BENDET*





**While he sometimes uses a prosthetic** on the ring finger he severed while on a mission in Rwanda, Maj. Sang Kim said he prefers not to use the fake appendage.



**A C-17 Globemaster III pilot,** Kim felt relief when a medical board said he could continue his aviation career after losing part of his left ring finger. Below, some of the other pilots in his squadron had a morale patch made for the major that depicts his injured hand. Kim proudly wears it on his uniform.

**M**aj. Sang Kim rang in the New Year in atypical fashion ... by losing part of his ring finger.

On New Year's Day 2009, Kim, a C-17 Globemaster III pilot, flew from his home station at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, en route to Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda in eastern-central Africa. He and his crew had been tasked to prep and load Rwandan Defense Force maintenance vehicles and other various cargo and haul them to war-torn Darfur, Sudan.

After arriving in Rwanda and loading the vehicles, three aerial porters began working on some U.N. water buffalos that also needed to be shipped.

"One of the porters asked me if I could find a pair of scissors," said Kim, commander for the 522nd Global Mobility Squadron at Travis. "I remembered seeing a toolkit on top of a water purification trailer, so I decided to check there."

He couldn't reach the toolbox so he stepped on the bottom edge of the trailer's platform, which was about a foot off of the ground. He opened the kit. It was empty.

As he shut the lid, his left ring finger got caught in the latch. At the same instant, he slipped off of the trailer.

"I heard a loud snap," he said. "And then I felt a little tingling sensation in my hand."

Kim looked down at his left mitt.

The top third of his ring finger was missing!

As his severed digit spurted blood, the major looked up at the

latch and found the top of his finger still dangling there.

"So I stepped back up on the trailer, and grabbed it," Kim said.

A Rwandan soldier who had witnessed the mishap ran

to the major's aid. He guided Kim into a vehicle and drove him to a nearby military clinic. Inside the dilapidated infirmary, two doctors were performing surgery on a boy who appeared to be about 10 years old.

"I walked in as they were operating on this boy, and it just didn't look like a very sterile environment," Kim said. "The whole setup seemed pretty primitive — very Third World."

Despite his trepidations, the medical personnel there cleaned and bandaged the

wound as best they could.

Meanwhile, the three aerial porters he'd been assisting got wind of his plight and rushed to his side. They called the embassy and contacted the main hospital in Kigali to coordinate the major's arrival. They also tracked down an ice chest to help preserve the detached appendage just in case there was a chance to reattach it.

On the way to the hospital, Kim's driver sped through the busy city streets, knowing the clock was ticking. After 20 minutes of

**"When the doctor took a look at my injury, he felt that there was only a small chance of successfully reattaching the finger."**



agony, the C-17 pilot arrived at the emergency room hoping doctors there would be able to put him back together.

But there was nothing they could do.

“They simply didn’t have the capability to reattach my finger at that facility,” Kim said.

Doctors administered pain-killing injections into his hand. They then told him he had about a six-hour window in which to save his finger. The problem was there was no such location in the country capable of performing such a tricky surgery.

An embassy nurse arrived, and they started discussing his limited options.

While medical facilities in Germany or South Africa would have been ideal, there simply wasn’t enough time to make that happen. Ultimately, they decided on a hospital in Nairobi, Kenya, which was only a short one-hour flight away.

The embassy arranged for his transportation, and had him in the air only 45 minutes later. After the hour flight, a driver met him at the airport and rushed him to the hospital in downtown Nairobi, which was only 15 minutes away.

“When the doctor took a look at my injury, he felt that there was only a small chance of successfully reattaching the finger,” Kim said. “He explained that it’s a complex surgery, especially trying to reconnect the nerves.”

But as the medical team rolled the major into the operating room, he remained hopeful.

After awaking from the surgery, however, doctors gave him the bad news.

They couldn’t reattach the finger.

“It wasn’t a big shock, and it really didn’t bother me that much,” he said. “My main focus was getting back to my guys and successfully completing the mission. There were a lot of atrocities being committed in Darfur, so it was really important for us to help ensure the U.N. peacekeeping efforts continued. Everything was secondary to that, including my injury.”

A day after his surgery, the major rejoined his crew and finished the mission.

When he returned to his home station, however, he was immediately removed from flying status, pending the outcome of a medical review board.

“I had to prove that I could still fly — push all the buttons, operate the stick and throttles,” he said. “I was able to do that with no problem.”

So the medical board said he could return to what he did best — flying the C-17.

Other than a couple of months of suffering from “phantom

finger” — the sensation of still having his digit — Kim encountered no long-term pain.

“I couldn’t type as good as I once did, but that was about my only limitation,” he said.

His wife, Megan, hasn’t seen any change.

“It hasn’t slowed him down at all,” she said. “I was scared when I first heard about it, because you, of course, want your husband to come back home in one piece. But it hasn’t affected his ability to be a good pilot, or a good husband and father. He still gets down and wrestles and plays with the kids just like always.”

Nevertheless, their two children, 5-year old twins Noah and Mackenzie, were a bit traumatized by the wound.

“After the accident, our son was doing an arts and crafts project at preschool and got a little cut on his finger,” Megan said. “He cried and told his teacher he thought it was going to fall off, just like his daddy’s. Seeing their dad hurt really frightened them. But now they are used to it, and our daughter even likes to put his prosthetic on for him.

“They’re still aware that their daddy was in an accident and is missing part of his finger, but it’s no big deal anymore. That’s just a part of who he is now.” ✨



**After celebrating their 10th anniversary April 29**, Sang and Megan Kim say they don’t need to wear their wedding rings to show their love and commitment to each other. “He can still wear a ring on his finger, but we are both leery of the danger since he works on the flight line. So most of the time he goes without it.”

## ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACKING

Looking back at the mishap that cost him the top third of his left ring finger, Maj. Sang Kim said he’s done a little “armchair quarterbacking” to see what he could have done better.

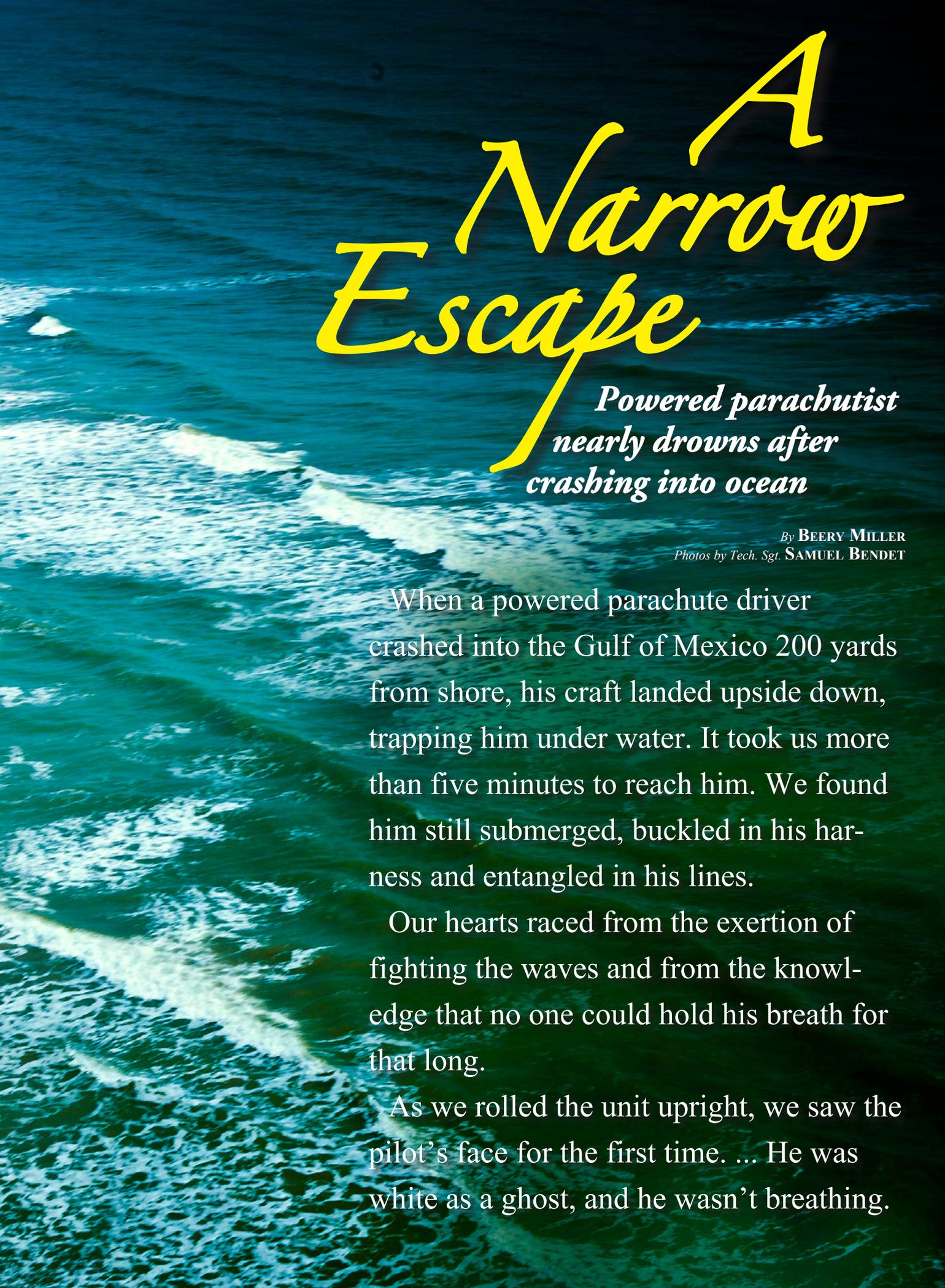
Ironically, he made a conscious effort to avoid an injury to his ring finger by leaving his wedding ring at home when he deployed. He said he never wears his ring on the flight line because of all the horror stories he’s heard about how dangerous it can be if it catches on something.

That said, he claims he did make one mistake.

“I should have gotten a step ladder to reach the toolkit,” he said. “The trailer was damp and slippery that day, and I was wearing a new pair of boots, which were also slick. Maybe if I’d used a ladder, I wouldn’t have slipped.”



**Soaring over the Gulf of Mexico**  
off the shores of Galveston, Texas, a  
powered parachutist prepares to land  
near the scene that nearly claimed the  
life of one of his brethren.

An aerial photograph of the Gulf of Mexico, showing deep blue water with white-capped waves breaking. The perspective is from above, looking down at the sea.

# A Narrow Escape

*Powered parachutist  
nearly drowns after  
crashing into ocean*

By **BEERY MILLER**  
Photos by Tech. Sgt. **SAMUEL BENDET**

When a powered parachute driver crashed into the Gulf of Mexico 200 yards from shore, his craft landed upside down, trapping him under water. It took us more than five minutes to reach him. We found him still submerged, buckled in his harness and entangled in his lines.

Our hearts raced from the exertion of fighting the waves and from the knowledge that no one could hold his breath for that long.

As we rolled the unit upright, we saw the pilot's face for the first time. ... He was white as a ghost, and he wasn't breathing.

It was an incident that will forever live in the minds of four Texas Powered Paraglider “WingNuts” and one powered parachute pilot. It began on the morning of Good Friday, March 25, 2005. En route to our chosen launch site of San Luis Pass on the west end of Galveston Island, Texas, we encountered intermittent patches of heavy fog. The weather radio indicated fog would remain patchy till about noon. This was normal for the spring when we have encountered 10-degree temperature shifts between two days on the Gulf of Mexico.

Arriving at our familiar launch site at 9:30 a.m., the fog-bank out in the gulf had forced a helicopter pilot and his two oilrig passengers to land at the beach. A quick discussion indicated the helicopter pilot had insufficient visibility about two miles out, and he was unable to land his aircraft on the helo pad at the rig. The helicopter pilot was very interested in the powered paragliders flying about.

Amazed at our equipment, he commented with a chortle, “Like to see *them* auto-rotate in on an engine-out.”

We moved up the beach about 500 yards from the helicopter. We knew sooner or later the chopper would generate a massive cloud of sand, coating everything in the area. That left our small band of paragliders closer than usual to the powered parachutists on the beach that day. Normally our two clubs give each other a little more clearance to avoid prop wash from each others’ launches. This little deviation from our normal ops soon would play a big role in controlling the chaos that lay ahead.

Three paragliders launched out over the beautiful blue-green water, followed 45 minutes later by two of our parachutist neighbors. Without incident, we passed cordially by one another on our way in to land at the beach.

One of our party, who attempted to have a little fun dragging his feet across the sandy beach at 20 mph, came in a little too low and “VRUMPF!” ... His whirling propeller sliced the sand with such force that a small piece of it



**Rescue workers and Good Samaritans** provide first aid to Ken Harger, who was not breathing after they freed him from his crashed aerial vehicle. CPR revived him that fateful Good Friday afternoon, allowing him, after a short hospital stay, to return home Sunday in time for Easter dinner with his family.

tore loose. We ran over to inspect and found the minor damage to be easily repairable. No real harm done.

Dale Catching, a paragliding pilot famous for his super-glue-and-baking-soda prop repair technique, began the patch up job to salvage the rest of the man’s flying day. Meanwhile, another member of our team, Tommy Rollins Sr., and his son, Tommy Jr., arrived and required mechanical assistance for an ailing motor.

These two maintenance delays would later appear as though they were an intervention by fate ... playing a key role in whether a man would live or die.

As we worked on the machines, we noticed a powered parachutist returning to land. He climbed to about 1,000 feet and initiated a spiral descent. During his last 360-degree turn, something went terribly wrong. The wingtip of his craft folded under!

The pilot, Ken Harger, cried out for help as he plunged from a height of around 100 feet toward the water.

Andy McAvin, owner of Texas Fly Sports; Tommy Sr. and Jr.; Dale; and I immediately began running the 200-plus yards to the water. We left our modesty behind as we stripped away our pants,

shirts, shoes and socks and entered the frigid 66-degree water.

Initially, it looked like the powered parachute pilot had managed to free himself from the harness. But what we thought was

*“As we got his head above water for the first time in more than five minutes, we all felt too much time had elapsed to see the unconscious man ever take another breath.”*

his head was actually one of the aircraft tires floating upside down. That meant he was still under water!

Fortunately for the pilot, the wave action pushed the craft back toward the second sandbar where it would eventually be grounded in 4 feet of water rather than being pushed toward deeper seas.

Precious seconds and minutes ticked away as we scrambled through the crashing waves to reach the oxygen-deprived crash victim. As we got Harger's head above water for the first time in more than five minutes, we all felt too much time had elapsed to see the unconscious man ever take another breath.

Nevertheless, we didn't hesitate.

Dale and Andy steadied the unit around the crashing waves. Tommy Sr. started chest compressions using the back of the seat as a support. I initiated mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Remarkably, after four or five rescue breaths, the pilot began spitting and coughing up water. Then, astonishingly, he began some much labored breathing.

We finally got the victim untangled and removed him from the harness. As we carried him to the beach, he went from unconscious to semi-conscious. But as he started to come to, Harger's memory returned to his final thoughts from just before he blacked out. Unfortunately for all involved, those final thoughts were of him drowning!

Fear gripped him, and then he started fighting for his life. Thrashing wildly, we quickly calmed him down by assuring him he was safe.

The grueling 200-yard carry of the pilot back to the beach wiped us out. Each one of us had grabbed an arm or leg, and

we supported his neck and head as best we could as we again struggled with the waves. Once we got Harger on the beach, we propped him on his side and began evaluating his condition. His body began the involuntary action of voiding his lungs of the seawater. We previously had individuals calling 9-1-1, and then repeated the request as we were able to give more specific information to the emergency medical services.

I asked the pilot to squeeze my finger with his left and right hands, and then wiggle his toes on both feet. Harger later would comment how he found it comforting as we let him know that everything was indeed working. This was important because the extremely low blood-oxygen state near-drowning victims fall into leave them unable to move much, yet fully conscious and aware of everyone's comments around them.

Emergency response took a good 20 to 30 minutes to reach the scene as the ambulance and other rescuers had to enter the beach at an alternate location because of the soft sand.

Miraculously, Harger entered the hospital on Good Friday and was released a couple of days later on Easter Sunday — just in time to enjoy a holiday meal with his family. Other than a sore knee, he suffered no ill effects.

For the rest of us, it proved to be an Easter weekend that we will never forget. ✈

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Mr. Miller is a research chemist for a major chemical company. Some of his projects involve designing chemicals that provide safer aircraft of all types. He also is the main organizer of the powered paraglider "WingNuts" flying club in Texas. Also contributing to this article was Maj. Dean Cherer, a senior analyst with the Air Force Recruiting Service at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, as well as a member of the WingNuts ([www.TXWingNuts.com](http://www.TXWingNuts.com)).



**Powered parachutist** Ken Harger, 55, barely escaped with his life when his aircraft crashed into the Gulf of Mexico, trapping him under water for more than five minutes. He still flies his contraption, but says he is no longer quite as daring as he'd been before the mishap.

# Rescue Lessons Learned

■ In all drowning events, medical personnel must be consulted, even if it appears the victim is OK. Secondary drowning can occur even when the victim is immediately resuscitated with no apparent problems. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, you only need to inhale four ounces of water to drown and even less to injure the lungs and become a victim of secondary drowning. Infections of the lungs and secondary drowning are always of concern, even a couple of days after exposure, doctors said.

■ Don't assume the people closest to the incident will respond. The only people who responded to our emergency were folks familiar with the flying equipment and specifically aware of the hazards associ-

ated with water landings and being trapped in the gear. If you need somebody to do something, point out the person and tell them "Do it!"

■ Get trained in first aid and CPR. Also, despite the hopelessness of the situation as you first come onto the scene, do all you have been trained to do. It can still have a positive outcome. None of us thought our victim would survive, but he did.

■ When entering the water, get rid of excess clothing. Had the pilot been in deeper seas, having jeans and shirts on would have been a serious problem.

■ Manage the rescue scene to improve survival odds. For instance, don't just plunge in without first directing someone to call 9-1-1; time is critical.

— Beery Miller



**Preparing to take off in his powered paraglider,** Beery Miller says he learned some important lessons after participating in the harrowing water rescue of a powered parachutist who crashed his craft and was trapped under water in the Gulf of Mexico.



# AFGHANISTAN AVALANCHE

## AIR FORCE RESCUERS SAVE LIVES

By Staff Sgt. **RICHARD WILLIAMS**

As the helicopter door slid open Feb. 9, snow flurries swirled inside, stinging the cheeks of Air Force Master Sgt. Jonathan Grant. The 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron pararescue team leader leaned out slightly into the whipping winds and minus-40 degree air to survey the remote area below.

He stared at a shocking scene of frozen bodies lying on the road and vehicles thrown about as if they were Matchbox cars. The rescue squadron team from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, had been called in earlier that morning to launch a rescue and evacuation mission for survivors of multiple avalanches that occurred in Salang Pass, Afghanistan, the day before. Salang is a major mountain pass connecting northern Afghanistan and Kabul province, with further connections to southern Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"We were told that there were thousands of people trapped and multiple vehicles with people still inside," said Grant, who is deployed from the Air Force Reserve Command's 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.

So the rescue squadron assembled extraction equipment and hypothermia kits to assist people who had been exposed to sub-zero temperatures, trapped in vehicles, and in some cases, buried in the snow for more than 12 hours.

The team loaded equipment and personnel on Army CH-47 helicopters assigned to Task Force Knighthawk and took off on the 30-minute flight to the avalanche site.

*"We don't really receive formal training on crowd control. In this situation we had a learning curve of about 15 seconds to decide how we were going to protect and reassure these people."*

Grant's team was on the first aircraft that arrived at the snow-covered pass, which had no defined landing zone. The pilots had to clear one for themselves.

Despite the possibility of enemy threats and more avalanches, as soon as the helicopter hit the ground, "we were cleared, so we grabbed our gear and began to secure

our area and assess the situation," Grant said. "That was an eerie feeling given the fact that we didn't see anyone moving."

That changed quickly as the rescuers were soon greeted by a crowd of people walking out of a tunnel.

Grant said the first thought that ran through his mind as he saw the shivering men, women and children was *"This is going to get crazy pretty quick."*

"We don't really receive formal training on crowd control," said Senior Master Sgt. Mike Ziegler, 33rd ERQS pararescue superintendent, also deployed from Florida. "In this situation we had a learning curve of about 15 seconds to decide how we were going to protect and reassure these people."

Waist-deep snow and an elevation of 11,500 feet provided a stark contrast to the flat terrain and expanse of water that surrounds Patrick AFB, where the Florida pararescuemen train day-to-day for mostly ocean rescues.

But that didn't slow them down.

The rescuers began to organize a reverse triage process. Typically, in an evacuation situation, people with the most severe inju-



*An Army CH-47 helicopter crew surveys the area during the rescue operation over Salang Pass, Afghanistan.*

Courtesy photos



ries are taken away first, Ziegler said. The reverse process allowed the most healthy to clear the area so the team could focus on more serious injuries and free those who were still trapped.

Once the initial rush of nearly 80 avalanche survivors was loaded onto helicopters and sent to Bagram, the team returned to the area to render more assistance.

For safety reasons, they organized individuals in a casualty collection point in one of the tunnels to keep them out of the elements and prepare them for evacuation, Ziegler said.

“We have had situations in the past where people have injured themselves trying to get on the aircraft,” he added. “A helicopter with a moving tail rotor can be very dangerous.”

After organizing the area, the team broke up into small groups so they could begin to rescue trapped victims.

Using shovels, they began to dig into the snow. They used heavy extraction equipment to cut through a metal bus frame, which freed even more people. According to Ziegler, the team dug tunnels through the vehicles and completed an on-scene triage to assess medical conditions of any survivors.

When it was all said and done, the team had freed dozens and completed 12 flights in a seven-hour period, assisting more than 300 people.

“This was an extremely dangerous mission,” said Capt. Gabe Hensley, 33rd ERQS combat rescue officer and another 920th member deployed from Florida. “We found out that there were 36 avalanches in the area that day. The road was used for enemy activities regularly, and there was potential for these elements to be mixed into the crowd of people. Additionally, we encountered some of the worst weather conditions imaginable.”

The captain added that the rescue team could have been trapped themselves, but “they accepted the risk” without batting an eye.

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*The 12-man U.S. team assisted more than 300 Afghans during the dangerous mission.*

# FLYING DOLPHINS?

## ALTUS AIRMEN HAUL UNIQUE CARGO IN C-17

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — Airmen from the 58th Airlift Squadron teamed up with Navy Marine Mammal Fleet Systems to take four bottlenose dolphins home June 11-15.

Air Force Capts. Judd Baker, Kristopher Herman and Carl Rotermund, as well as Tech. Sgt. Douglas Campbell and Staff Sgt. Daniel Carbon, assisted in the movement of the dolphins, flying the animals from Norfolk, Va., to Point Loma Sub Base, San Diego.

Before the airlift mission, the crew joined another team in Milwaukee for the “Air & Water Show” at the Milwaukee Lakefront. From there, they flew to Norfolk to pick up Navy passengers who were assisting in the movement.

The dolphins, originally based out of Point Loma Submarine Base in San Diego, were in Norfolk in support of Frontier Sentinel, an annual training exercise consisting of almost 2,500 Canadian and U.S. military forces and government civilian agencies. The focus of this year’s Frontier Sentinel was maritime homeland defense. The mine-hunting dolphins were on the job to assist with underwater mine clearance around Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, Va.

To transport the dolphins, slight adjustments were made on the Altus C-17 Globemaster III to ensure a safe, comfortable flight for the animals, as well as the Naval team and aircrew members.

“We requested that the cabin pressure be maintained at 6,000 feet and that the cabin temperature be maintained at 55 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit,” said Braden Duryeem, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command spokesman. “We also requested a shallow takeoff and landing and to be easy on the brakes. This (kept) the water in the animal transport containers and not on the deck of the aircraft.”

Special care and considerations also were made to ensure the dolphins’ flight was as smooth as possible.

“We took off from Norfolk, and we used the whole runway for a nice, slow rolling takeoff,” Baker said. “Under normal conditions we would do a standing or static takeoff, which has the motors already spooled up before takeoff and brake release. That creates more of a lurch, like popping the clutch on your car. Obviously we wanted to avoid that.”

The dolphins spent the ride across the United States in specially designed cradles — open-topped tanks installed with water-circulating pumps. The tanks rested in a sling that reduced the shocks and turbulence of flight.



*Koa, a bottlenose dolphin, receives an in-flight snack from Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Elizabeth A. Jache. The sailor fed the dolphin the small fish while aboard a C-17 Globemaster III from Altus AFB, Okla., June 14.*

“On every marine mammal airlift, we have dolphin handlers, training staff, and veterinary staff,” Duryeem said. “The marine mammals have personnel attending to them at all times for the entire transport. At minimum we will have one handler/trainer per dolphin, one technical representative, one transport coordinator and one veterinarian.”

— Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Seidl  
97th Air Mobility Wing Public Affairs

# C-130 CREW HANDLES UNUSUAL IN-FLIGHT EMERGENCY IN IRAQ

*JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq* — After overcoming multiple mechanical problems, a C-130H Hercules crew from the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here safely landed their aircraft with 34 passengers aboard June 9.

The four-engine tactical airlifter was dispatched from Joint Base Balad to transport passengers on a half-hour flight from Baghdad International Airport to Erbil, Iraq. After reaching an altitude of 12,000 feet on the climb out of Baghdad, loadmasters Senior Airmen John Pittman and Kevin Tidd reported a severe hydraulic leak to Capt. Matt Mansell, the aircraft commander.

Several gallons of caustic hydraulic fluid sprayed into the air inside the cabin before 1st Lt. Brian Fedor, the co-pilot, could shut off the pumps. Crewmembers helped passengers don emergency oxygen hoods to protect their eyes and respiratory system from the caustic mist.

Lt. Col. Maurice Young, a flight surgeon from the 55th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron who was flying with the crew, provided first aid to the passengers who had been most affected by the leak.

The aircrew found the leak was from the primary hydraulic system, which operates the landing gear, flaps, brakes, nose wheel steering and half of the flight-control power.

Staff Sgt. Jason Carlton, a flight engineer, referenced his emergency checklists and used manual procedures to lower the landing gear and flaps in preparation for landing.

Initial problems lowering the landing gear raised concerns that



by Oshatobe Yasuo

*When several gallons of hydraulic fluid sprayed into the cabin of a C-130 while in-flight over Iraq, crewmembers had to help protect passengers from the caustic mist and then safely land the broken aircraft.*

there also had been a leak in the emergency nose gear extension system and emergency brakes. The aircrew was able to confirm the gear was down and locked, and the aircraft was safe to land.

Mansell and his crew brought the aircraft to a successful landing at Balad, with only partial power to the flight controls and no anti-skid braking.

Passengers were evaluated by medical care providers from the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group and released. A second C-130 from the 777th EAS flew the passengers to their final destination in Erbil.

— Lt. Col. Nathan Allerheiligen  
777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron commander

## MULTIPLE ERRORS LEAD TO C-21A TRANSPORTER MISHAP

An Air Force accident investigation board determined that a C-21A crew made multiple errors that led to their aircraft departing the end of the runway at Ali Air Base, Iraq, Nov. 2, causing significant damage to the jet.

Investigators said they found “clear and convincing evidence” that the crew “failed to sufficiently reduce speed and altitude during their approach to execute a normal landing, failed to complete the appropriate checklist for a high-speed partial flap landing and failed to recognize that there was insufficient runway remaining to sufficiently land.” The board also said the

crew should have initiated a “go-around” to correct the aforementioned deviations. Additionally, investigators noted that the aircraft provided multiple audible and visual warnings that its sink rate was excessive, but that the crew disregarded those warnings and took no corrective actions.

As a result, the aircraft touched down two-thirds of the way down the runway, departed the prepared surface and came to rest 200 feet off the end of the runway. The aircraft sustained more than \$1.8 million in damages.

There were no injuries or damage to other property.

The mishap occurred on the first of four scheduled sorties of a combat operational support airlift mission. The aircraft, assigned to the 375th Air Mobility Wing, Scott Air Force Base, Ill., operated out of the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing at Al Udeid AB, Qatar.

*When a C-21A touched down too far down the runway at Ali Air Base, Iraq, Nov. 2, it didn't have enough room to land and departed the prepared surface, causing more than \$1.8 million in damages.*



by Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp