

Air Education and Training Command's
TORCH
September/October 2010



**ADAPTING
TO FATIGUE**
Tired aviators at risk for mishap
PAGE 22

**OHI,
HENRY!**

Airman is a
world-class
bodybuilder

Page 8

PUMPING IRON

How to lift weights without getting injured

PAGE 13

SHUDDER TO SHUTTER

Photographer's first alert ... a fatality!

PAGE 14

GETTING HIGH IN COLOMBIA

Instructors assist South American
neighbors in altitude chamber

PAGE 16

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COVER STORY

8 Oh, Henry!

When it comes to fitness and using safe workout techniques, Tech. Sgt. David Henry knows a thing or two. He muscled up to become a world-class bodybuilder, earning five professional titles, including Mr. Olympia.

14 Shudder to Shutter

First alert assignment proves unsettling for a new cameraman who must photograph a fatality.



16 GETTING HIGH IN COLOMBIA

Air Education and Training Command instructors assisted their South American neighbors in Bogota, Colombia, in altitude chamber training. At more than 8,600 feet above sea level, this altitude chamber is the highest in the world and ready to serve nations throughout the continent.

21 Traveling Abroad

An Airman serving in Bogota, Colombia, learns a few rules of the road for traveling in a foreign country.

TORCH TALK 2

Readers discuss a near-drowning, an historical math problem, an aircraft crash that resulted in the death of two pilots, taking responsibility for actions, recruiting, a T-6 photo and more.

AROUND THE COMMAND 4

Altus Airmen render aid to accident victim ... Kids handle bat with rabies.

TALES OF THE STRANGE 6

Man mauled by bear, struck by lightning — twice!



THE ALERT CONSUMER 7

Waxed! 'Tis the season for candle fires ... Candle with care.

HANGAR FLYING 22

Adapting to fatigue — airmanship, knowledge of the threat, the plan of action, recover and survive.



CLEAR THE RUNWAY 24

New ejection seat added to T-38 ... Insufficient speed during landing leads to Predator crash ... Investigators reveal details of E-4B mishap.

September/October 2010
Volume 17, Number 5

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Col. JOHN W. BLUMENTRITT
AETC director of safety

SUMMER OF '10

As far as memorable summers go, summer of '69, with an associated safety message, is frequently explored in high school and college government classes. Most Torch readers are too young to actually remember the July 1969 car accident involving the late Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy. However, students worldwide continue to study the political fallout from the disastrous Chappaquiddick Island, Mass., incident that claimed the life of passenger Mary Jo Kopechne. Arguably, many believe the mishap affected the history of the United States in the form of a presidential election.

On a more personal note, the summer of 2001 stands out to me. The previous spring, as a young and energetic lieutenant colonel, I had left the Pentagon to command the 50th Education Squadron at the Air Force Academy. By July, my squadron was fully engaged in educating men and women, validating concepts in flight simulators and wargaming facilities, and hosting tens of thousands of visitors a year in our planetarium. I also had a blast energizing my safety program and even proposed to my group commander that our squadron should lead mishap prevention efforts for the whole group! My safety officer cringed, but I was elated when he said yes. And I'm pleased to say that during my tenure, our group suffered no fatalities.

For Air Education and Training Command, the summer of 2010 will go down as one of the best ever as far as

safety and mishap prevention are concerned. Indeed, this is the first summer in the command's history that not a single active-duty military member lost his or her life to a preventable mishap, whether on or off duty. Furthermore, none of our civilians perished from on-duty mishaps either.

In reaching such a lofty goal, does luck play a part? Without a doubt.

Earlier this year, we had a 30-year-old technical sergeant lose control of his motorcycle and fall off an overpass to the ground some 60 feet below. He suffered multiple internal and external injuries, including fractures to his right arm, left wrist, T-spine and both hip joints, as well as a ruptured bladder and lacerated liver and spleen. Fortunately, he survived. In another incident, a 24-year-old airman first class pulled into the path of a semi tractor-trailer traveling on a highway with a posted speed limit of 65 mph. The Airman sustained a fractured hip, but will recover.

Obviously, the outcome of either of these incidents could have been far more tragic.

But while good fortune certainly played a part in our outstanding summer, luck favors the prepared. And as a command, we have never been more primed to reduce our preventable mishap numbers and save lives.

It's a testament to commanders, supervisors and wingmen at every level that their efforts are paying off.

You made the summer of 2010 so memorable because, for the first time ever, we didn't have to make any sad phone calls or visits to moms and dads to notify them that their child was lost in a senseless preventable mishap.

So, unlike the horrific Chappaquiddick incident, there will be no tragic mishap stories to recall that alter history. Instead, like my superstar squadron and group long ago, AETC proved we can achieve fatality-free summers. It's tough, but together, we can make it happen again.

"While good fortune certainly played a part in our outstanding summer, luck favors the prepared. And as a command, we have never been more primed to reduce our mishap prevention numbers and save lives."

John W. Blumentritt

A SHOCKING TALE

That's an amazing story you featured in the July/August 2010 Torch on your cover ("A Narrow Escape," page 16). I was shocked when I read that the victim had been under water for more than five minutes and they still managed to save his life with no long-lasting ill effects. I'm surprised he didn't suffer from brain

damage or worse. Kudos to his rescuers who acted quickly and never gave up on reviving him even when it seemed so hopeless. That's a great lesson learned.

Darrell Carruth
Via e-mail

THE MATH DOESN'T WORK

I first want to commend you on a fantastic magazine! You not only promote safety awareness, but you do so in a creative, inspiring and entertaining way. You give your readers reason to stop and think, ask ourselves questions, perhaps laugh and sometimes shed a tear. This all results in more folks wanting to read Torch more often, which gets out your safety message.

Now, I have a question. One of your recent thought-provoking articles, "The Black Bean" from the July/August 2010 issue ("From the Director" column on the opening page), gave me reason to question my math skills. The story relates that Santa Ana ordered 10 percent of the 176 Texan prisoners be killed, and that indeed, 17 unlucky men drew the black bean and were shot by firing squad. But didn't they round up in those days?

Ten percent of 176 is 17.6. Why didn't they round up and shoot 18 instead of 17? Just curious.

Lt. Col. Jim Barlow

Randolph Air Force Base, Texas

As part of the research used to craft "The Black Bean" column, we stumbled upon your thought-provoking issue. In fact, we discovered the Mexican Army

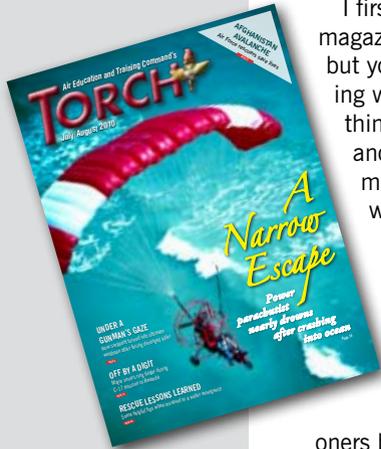
did indeed execute 18 Texans, versus the 17 reported in history books. But the last man was killed a month later, and he did not face the firing squad for picking a black bean. Instead, the explanations surrounding this unfortunate soul's death seem to be more sinister.

The victim was Capt. Ewen Cameron, a Scotsman who had fought during the Texas Revolution and other skirmishes against and for the Mexican Army (Cameron County in south Texas is named in his honor).

There were a few reasons the captain may have been chosen to be executed. Some historians suggest that he was selected to make up for the lack of rounding up to an 18th victim. Others propose that he was targeted because he was the leader of the escape from Hacienda Salado. Still a third reason, too, could have been because of the fact that a few years before he'd had a dispute with a revengeful Mexican general, Antonio Canales. It is rumored that Canales was the one who ordered Cameron's execution.

Others believe all of these factors combined led to Cameron's execution, but we may never know for certain why they didn't initially round up to 18.

It just goes to show that you may dodge a bullet and get away with mistakes one day, but lady luck might leave you the next. So make the right choices!



LETTERS TO TORCH

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A MYSTERIOUS END



I read with interest the Torch article titled "Pilot and Instructor Die in Fiery Crash" (May/June 2010 issue, page 25). Based on the report, it sounds like the pilot probably froze up at the controls during takeoff. Since the investigation revealed that there was nothing mechanically wrong with the aircraft, I wonder why the instructor pilot wasn't able to take the controls from the man who froze up and stop the aircraft before it

crashed into the trees? I read the National Transportation Safety Board report on-line and saw more pictures of the scene, and it appeared they had plenty of time to stop the aircraft. What a tragic situation. I guess the actions, or non-actions, of the pilots will remain a mystery.

Travis Eastman
Via e-mail

A T-6 FOR THE SWISS



By Steve Thurrow

We are a Swiss company — Suter Aircraft Technology AG — developing and producing tailor-made high-end products for the general aviation and military industries. For our new Web page, we would like to feature a nice picture on the front, indicating what our business consists of. I came across your Web site and found a nice picture of a T-6 Texan II in your media gallery (“A Perilous

Path,” July/August 2008 issue, page 21). It would make a nice graphic for us. Can we use it?

*Urs Fasel
Via e-mail*

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‘IT’S ALL ABOUT ME!’

I’ve been following your magazine for years. For many of the stories, the solution comes down to a simple concept: “It’s all about me!”

Everything we do in life consists of choices, and those choices can affect one or thousands of people. Individuals need to take full responsibility for their actions. The choices I make, the decisions I make and the direction in life I travel are all reflective of the person I am and how I conduct my life. I don’t want to get hurt, so safety is all about me. I don’t want to hurt anyone else, so safety is

all about me. I don’t want to be responsible for the loss of an aircraft or damage to government property, so safety is all about me.

Is this a selfish statement? Not in this context.

If each one of us took full responsibility for our actions and thought about the repercussions or benefits of those actions, I firmly believe there would be a significant decrease in mishaps.

*Paul E. Gomez
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas*

ALL THE RAVE

I am a recruiter out in Guam. I was just visiting with the public affairs office here (Anderson Air Force Base), and they were telling me all about you guys and raving about your products. I plan to use the Torch calendar, magazine and posters for my new recruits.

*Staff Sgt. Bennett Reeves
Guam*



ALTUS AIRMEN RENDER AID TO ACCIDENT VICTIM

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — Three Altus Airmen rendered aid at the scene of a major vehicle accident Sept. 8.

Staff Sgt. Adam Hills and Airmen 1st Class Bryan Foley and Arryawana Saldana of the 97th Civil Engineer Squadron were returning to Altus Air Force Base from Lawton, Okla., after reconfiguring two Altus emergency response vehicles for the Mobile Emergency Operations Center.

"The (vehicle) was rolled over on the driver side," Hills said. "There were one or two civilian vehicles already there, and people on scene were helping the victims out of the truck. There were no emergency services yet on the scene."

Rose Jenkins, a 97th Medical Wing licensed practical nurse, and her 4-year-old grandson were traveling in the rain. Jenkins had her vehicle in cruise control.

"I had no idea not to use my cruise control in inclement weather," Jenkins said. "I didn't want to get a ticket, so I put the cruise control on."

What she was about to discover is that having the cruise control on in the rain can cause the vehicle to spin out of control, especially if the driver doesn't disengage it once the dangerous slipping and sliding begins.

"I saw a little puddle on the road; and when I hit that, it felt like the car went airborne," she said. "I had no control of it. When I hit the ground, I was drifting off into a grassy area. I turned my wheel, and the car spun around and shot out to the other side of the highway. I turned it again; it spun back to the middle. I never thought about the cruise control. It spun me back on the other side, and it started flipping over and skidding."

She held on tight, and when the car came to a stop, they were in the middle of the oncoming lane.

"I asked my grandson if he was OK, and he said, 'I'm OK but why are we upside down?'" Jenkins said.

The three Airmen stopped immediately and, with the aid of two

other civilians, helped to stabilize the situation. They risked their own lives to come to the aid of others, Jenkins said.

"They make me proud," she added. "They stopped traffic. I was pushing on windows, pushing on doors. I began to panic, and thought, 'How am I going to get out of this car?'"

When she saw a big truck bearing down on her, it only added to the terror.

"(The Airmen) got the back (of the vehicle) open and got me out," Jenkins said.

Having the cruise control on in the rain can cause the vehicle to spin out of control, especially if the driver doesn't disengage it once the dangerous slipping and sliding begins.

Saldana began guiding other cars away from the scene to avoid further collisions and keeping the situation from getting any worse.

Foley and Hills helped the child into Foley's car to get him out of the downpour.

After ensuring the youngster had no injuries, Foley kept him warm and dry in his vehicle.

"He told me he was cold, so I turned on the heat and gave (him) my uniform top to try and stay warm," Foley said. "We instructed him to keep still and not fall asleep as he told us his head hurt."

Hills helped Jenkins out of the wrecked car and dressed a wound on her elbow with the response vehicle's first aid kit.

"She was very scared and frazzled," he said.

But Hills said the fear and panic in her face was replaced with relief when they took her to Foley's car and she saw that her grandson was OK.

The in-vehicle subscription-based communications system had already notified emergency medical services of the accident. By the time emergency medical services and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol arrived, the three Airmen had secured the scene and the victims. The Airmen helped load the patients into the ambulance.

"I was happy we just happened to be there," Hills said. "Between all of the emergency management training, self-aid buddy-care training and confidence in our emergency response abilities, I feel Ms. Jenkins and her grandson were both in good and capable hands until help could arrive."

Jenkins couldn't agree more.

"In my opinion it was a heroic act," she said. "Seeing them there in their uniforms brought me peace. They were cool; they were calm. They were, to me, at their finest. They knew what to do, and they did it. When I saw them, I knew everything would be all right."

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



by Senior Airman Leandra D. Hernandez

Reunited for the first time since the mishap, Staff Sgt. Adam Hills, left, and Airmen 1st Class Arryawana Saldana, middle, and Bryan Foley, right, visit with Rosa Jenkins, whom they helped rescue in a Sept. 8 vehicle mishap. The three Airmen are with the 97th Civil Engineer Squadron, while Jenkins hails from the 97th Medical Group.

KIDS HANDLE BAT WITH RABIES

GOODFELLOW AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — In early October at The Landings at Goodfellow Air Force Base, four dependent children were found holding a bat ... the kind with wings, not the kind that hits baseballs.

Tests confirmed the animal had rabies, and the children underwent a two-week vaccination series to ensure they did not contract the disease.

San Angelo, Texas, is a large rural area where animals and humans often come into contact, and some of these animals may carry deadly diseases.

Rabies is a viral infection most commonly spread from animals to humans through contact with saliva from animal bites and is 100 percent lethal to humans if left untreated, according to John McEachern, a regulatory wildlife biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in San Angelo. Although uncommon today in America, rabies is still

widespread in wild animals and must be considered a possible threat whenever contact with wild animals occurs.

But rabies is not the only disease that can be passed from wild animals to humans, McEachern warned. He said there is a host of bacterial, fungal and sometimes viral animal diseases which can easily be passed to humans through direct contact.

"Animals here have adapted to utilize urban areas, especially when foraging for food," the wildlife biologist said. "So encounters with skunks, raccoons, deer or many other



© by James F. Parnell

animals are not uncommon in San Angelo and the surrounding towns. A person should never approach these animals. Even though they run away most of the time, they are capable of defending themselves. If a wild animal lets you approach it, something is probably wrong; the animal may be sick or injured."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly all mammals can contract rabies, but it is most commonly found in animals such as bats, raccoons, skunks and foxes. Common wild animals also are known for other transferrable diseases like Giardiasis, a parasitic infection which causes diarrhea, and Leptospirosis, a bacterial infection with flu-like symptoms that can be lethal.

Capt. Irene R. Jackson, 17th Medical Group Public Health Officer, said the best way to prevent infection is to avoid contact with wild animals.

Do not offer a wild animal food or shelter, she said. If contact cannot be avoided, immediately wash your hands and any wounds with soap and water, she added.

To report a wild or domestic animal of concern on base, call the base civil engineer squadron customer service desk. If off base, call the local animal control hotline. For additional information about health concerns associated with wild animals, call the base public health office.

— *Airman 1st Class Jessica D. Keith*
17th Training Wing Public Affairs

"Rabies is a viral infection most commonly spread from animals to humans through contact with saliva from animal bites and is 100 percent lethal to humans if left untreated."

MAN MAULED BY BEAR, STRUCK BY LIGHTNING ... TWICE!

Jerry LeDoux isn't sure whether he's the luckiest man alive or the unluckiest. On the one hand, he's been mauled by a bear and struck by lightning on two separate occasions, which makes him feel a bit cursed. On the other hand, not many people incur Mother Nature's wrath to such a violent degree and live to tell about it.

LeDoux, a 67-year-old former Navy Seal who received the Purple Heart for the three bullets he took in Vietnam, prefers to think of himself as lucky. The master mechanic from Sulphur, La., realizes all too well the odds of all of these calamities happening to one man is bordering on the infinitesimal. It's like a dark cloud hovers over him.

LeDoux, however, figures he's fortunate to have survived it all.

"Funny things happen, and it gets rough," he said in an interview with "Book of Odds" writer Zachary Turpin. "But I'm still waking up every morning, going about my business."

A black bear attacked LeDoux in 1990 when he and his wife stopped at a roadside park in Arkansas. They spotted what they thought were baby bears digging in trash cans. LeDoux exited his vehicle to take some photos. Then he started feeding the bears.

But he got too close.

One of the bears stood up, and "I realized this is no baby," he told Turpin. "It bit me up pretty good."

Then in August of 1999, LeDoux was working outside during a storm and was struck by lightning. He told "Book of Odds" that it ruptured some discs in his neck and back, burned a stainless steel necklace into his chest and inflicted some brain damage that causes him memory loss and bouts of depression to this day.

"It did a little number on me," he said.

During the second lightning strike, in August 2005, LeDoux was driving a Ford Focus when lightning struck and knocked him out.

"When I came to, I was parked sideways on the road," he told Turpin. "I'd always heard you were safe from lightning in your car."

After the second strike, some people started calling him "Lightning Rod" and "Sparky." LeDoux takes it all in stride; and even though he's had some bad luck, he doesn't believe "the gods are out to get him." Especially since the bear mauling could have been



"After the second strike, some people started calling him 'Lightning Rod' and 'Sparky.' ... But even though he's had some bad luck, he doesn't believe 'the gods are out to get him.'"

avoided if he'd just stayed in his vehicle, and one of the lightning strikes could have been prevented if he'd gone indoors during the violent thunderstorm.

Nevertheless, it's enough to make even the biggest skeptic consider surrounding himself with rabbits' feet and four leaf clovers.

WAXED! 'TIS THE SEASON FOR CANDLE FIRES

Candles are pretty. Candles smell good. Candles are romantic. Candles also can be deadly.

Sept. 4, 2006: An unattended candle caused one of Chicago's deadliest and most heartbreaking fires in years. The blaze killed six children ages 3 to 14, some of whom screamed "We're burning!" as neighbors watched helplessly.

Dec. 25, 2008: A home fire on Christmas day claimed the life of a 3-year-old boy in south New Jersey. The culprit? A decorative candle too close to the Christmas tree and too close to a child. The boy started to play with the candle, and before anyone could react, the tree burst into flame, which engulfed the room in seconds.

Dec. 23, 2009: A 60-year-old woman in an Oregon nursing home died when a candle she was burning caught her room on fire. She had fallen asleep in a chair and left the candle unattended for hours.

According to National Fire Protection Association experts, we are entering the peak holiday season where candle fires reach their deadly height. In December alone, candle fires more than triple, officials said. On average each year, the top three days for home candle fires are Christmas, Christmas Eve and New Year's Day, in that order, they added.

Here are some other important statistics on candle fires reported by the NFPA.

◆ Candles cause an estimated 15,600 fires in residential structures, 150 deaths, 1,270 injuries, and \$539 million in estimated direct property damage each year.

◆ Forty-one percent of U.S. home candle fires begin in the bedroom, causing 24 percent of the deaths resulting from these fires.

◆ Seven out of 10 households in the United States now use candles, with younger adults more likely to use them than older ones.

Children and the elderly are the ones most likely to become victims of candle fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

◆ More than one-third of candle fires occurred after candles were left unattended, abandoned or inadequately controlled.

◆ More than half of all candle fires started when something that could burn, such as furniture, mattresses, bedding, curtains or decorations, were too close to the candle.

◆ Six percent of candle fires were started by people (usually children) playing with the candle.

◆ Twelve percent of home candle fires started after the candle user fell asleep.

◆ Half of all civilian candle fire deaths occur between midnight and 6 a.m.



by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bender

CANDLE WITH CARE

◆ Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed.

◆ Don't fall asleep with candles burning. Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn.

◆ Use candle holders that are sturdy and won't tip over easily.

◆ Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and loose clothing away from the flame.

◆ Don't burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.

◆ Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.

◆ Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting ready to use during a power outage. Never use candles as a lighting or heating source.

◆ Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle.

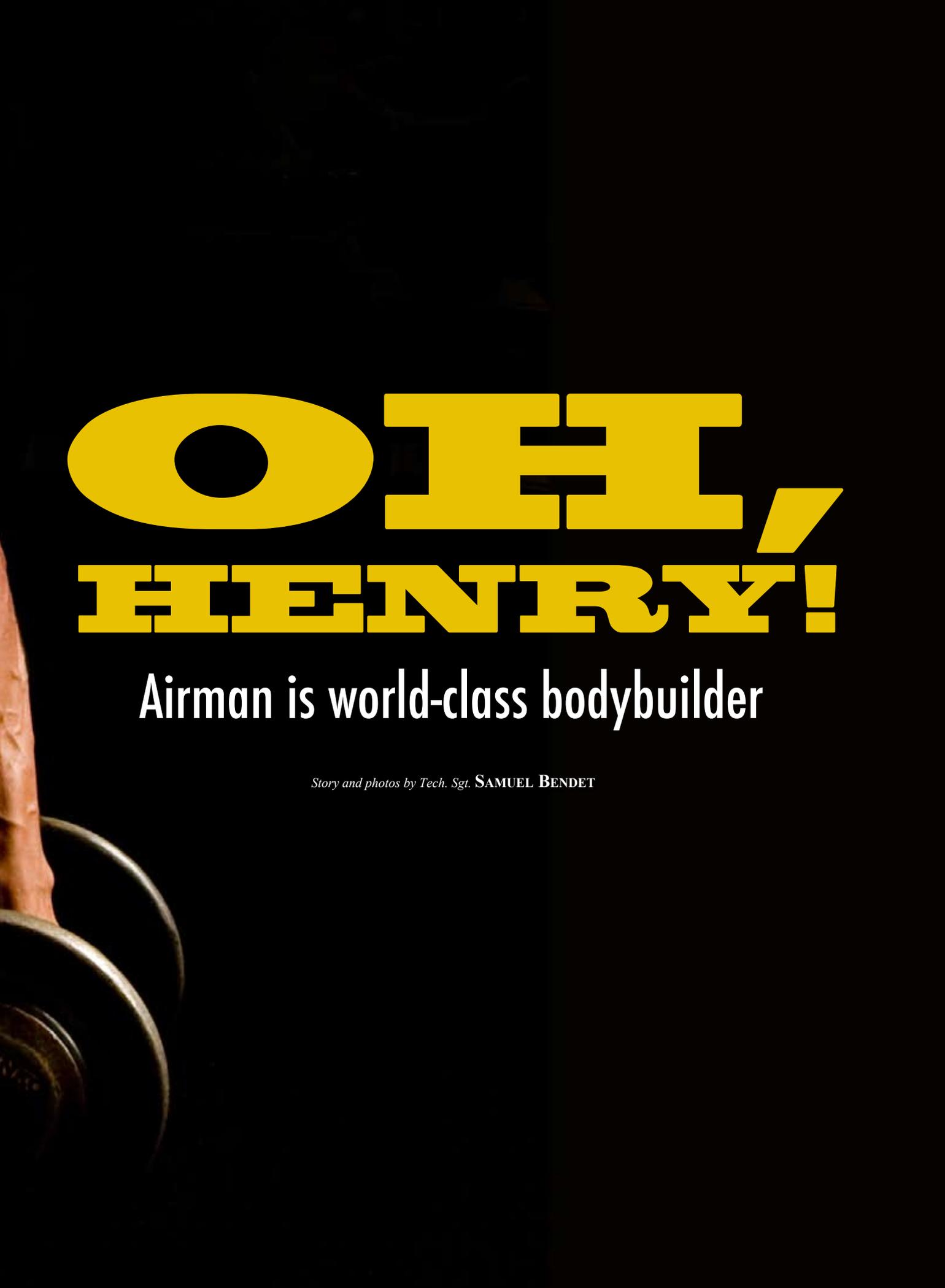
◆ The biggest tip for candle safety is not to burn them at all.

◆ There are impressively realistic flameless wax candles readily available — many are even scented.

— National Fire Protection Association



Crowned the 2008 Mr. Olympia,
Tech. Sgt. David Henry is still ranked
number two in the world in his weight
class because of a strong work ethic.



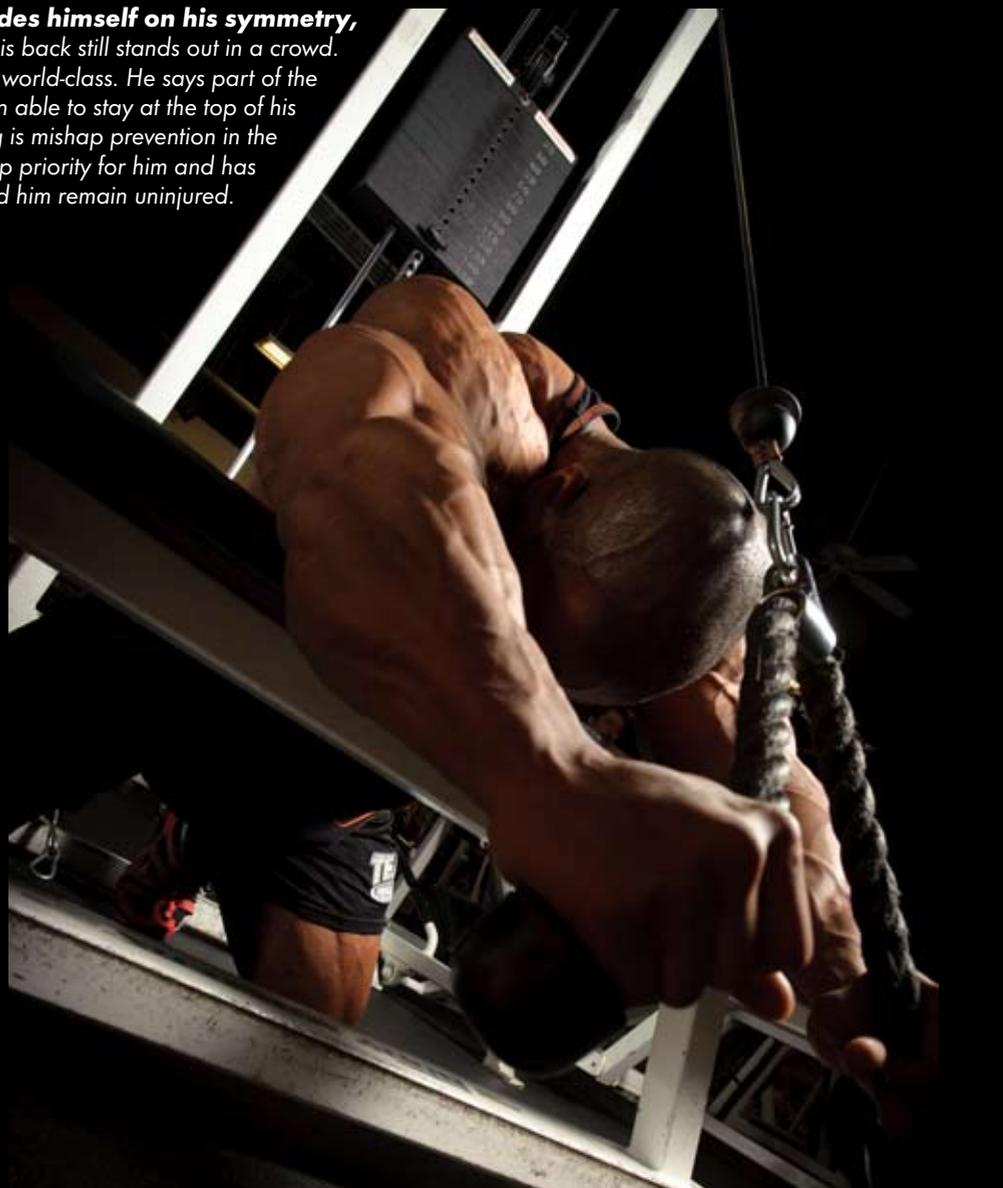
OJEL, HENRY!

Airman is world-class bodybuilder

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. SAMUEL BENDET



While Henry prides himself on his symmetry, he has to admit that his back still stands out in a crowd. His back muscles are world-class. He says part of the reason he has been able to stay at the top of his game for so long is mishap prevention in the gym is a top priority for him and has helped him remain uninjured.





W

hen Tech. Sgt. David Henry was in high school, he played drum in the marching band. But he isn't your typical band camper. Henry is a muscle-bound Mr. Olympia.

A weapons expeditor at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., Henry has won five professional International Federation of Body Building titles and

was crowned Mr. Olympia in 2008 in the under 202-pound category (he took second in both 2009 and 2010).

Henry grew up in Schertz, a suburb of San Antonio. He's a military brat and part of the Air Education and Training Command family. His parents both worked at Randolph AFB, Texas — his father an active-duty Airman and his mother an employee of the base commissary.

As a matter of fact, the first bodybuilding competition Henry tested himself in was at Lackland AFB, Texas, in 1991. He was 16 years old, and though he had never worked out with weights before, he had a naturally muscular build. With encouragement from some friends, he took part in the Lackland Classic, the military's oldest running bodybuilding competition, ongoing for 27 years.

"I placed third in the lightweight novice without ever having touched a weight," the Airman said.

From that point on, Henry began marching to the beat of a different drum. Today at 35 years old, he is leaner and meaner than ever.

"I was voted in FLEX magazine as one of the top-10 hardest-training bodybuilders of all time (ranked seventh)," Henry said.

Which is ironic because the Airman prides himself on working smarter not harder.

"I'm in the gym only four days a week for an hour and a half each session," he said with a shrug of his massive shoulders. "But I have my workouts down to a science."

Amazingly, he's only been hurt once, tweaking a muscle about five years ago during a warm-up.

"I lost a little focus, and 'Ow!'" he said. "It felt like a whole strand of cables snapped in my shoulder. I saw my career quickly going down the drain, and I decided I would never lose concentration again."

It turned out the strain wasn't that serious, and he only needed to take a little time off. But that scare was enough to set him straight. He now champions risk management in the gym.

"One of the biggest mistakes people make in the weight room is not having a spotter," Henry said. "I saw one guy working out alone trying to bench press a weight he couldn't handle. We call guys like that 'sternum poppers' because they are always bouncing the bar off their chests. Well, his arms gave out, and he couldn't get the weight off his chest. Before we could jump up to help, he rolled the bar down his abs, lap and legs. That had to hurt!"

But Henry said it could have been worse if the weights had gotten stuck on his neck.

He also pointed out that a lot of guys like to work out with their wives or girlfriends.

"But if you weigh 250 and are benching 300, your 98-pound girlfriend is probably not going to be able to lift the weight off your chest if your arms give out," he said. "You should work out with someone who is approximately your same size and strength. That's what I do."

Another mistake he sees people make is not using collars to secure the weights to the bar.

"If you don't use a collar, weights can slide off one side and catapult the bar," he said. "I saw a guy take a bar to the shoulder. Another time the bar popped up and smashed a mirror."

And, of course, he always preaches about avoiding distractions or not trying to show off for the cute lady who happens to be walking by. He said more times than not, people will instead end up embarrassing themselves at best and hurting themselves at worst.

With more and more Airmen hitting the gym these days to meet more stringent Air Force fitness standards, Henry recommends they try to achieve muscle-building balance.

"Too many guys just want to work on their upper body," he said. "They get huge upstairs, but then have these little legs. We call them 'popsicles' because that's what they look like."

Henry is certainly no "popsicle," and is renowned for his evenly proportioned physique.

"Physically, the best bodybuilders are the ones who have the typical X frame: wide shoulders, top-to-bottom, front-to-back, side-to-side; overall everything is equal," he said.



Two T-bone and two rib eye steaks — nearly four pounds of beef — contain roughly the amount of protein Henry needs to consume each day to maintain his muscular build. Of course, he doesn't actually eat that much red meat every day; instead, choosing to take protein supplements, along with a healthy diet, to achieve his dietary needs.

Henry is the epitome of this with an 18.5-inch neck, 21-inch biceps, 50-inch chest, 29.5-inch waist, 29-inch thighs and 19-inch calves on a 5-foot-5-inch frame.

Those are dimensions that have served him well in his bodybuilding career and even have him rubbing elbows with some celebrities.

"I was on the stage in 2007 when Ronny Coleman did his last show — he was an eight-time Mr. Olympia and the hugest guy I've ever seen."

Henry also has met California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and hung out with Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes.

"You'd be amazed at the people you meet in the industry who follow bodybuilding," he said.

But his wife, Nicole, who helps train him during the final two weeks before competitions, and his 16-year-old daughter, Alyssa, help keep him grounded.

"My daughter's friends see me and find out I'm a Mr. Olympia and get excited," he said, rolling his eyes. "But my daughter has grown up with me this way, so it's no big deal to her. To her, I'm just Dad."

And that's just the way he likes it. 🍖



Henry's wife, Nicole, is a personal trainer and helps her husband train the final two weeks before a competition.

PUMPING IRON

How to lift without injury

✓ **Wear appropriate footwear and clothing.**

It's a popular trend to wear toe socks, but that's a good way to get your toes broken. Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes and shoes that cover your toes.

✓ **Do a proper warm-up.** It's easy to injure cold muscles, so you need a good 10-minute warm up before getting started. But be sure to warm up the muscles you are going to be using. If you only warm up your upper body, but then go do squats, your leg muscles are still going to be cold and vulnerable to injury.

✓ **Use weight collars.** These safety devices are attached to each end of the bar to keep the weights from slipping off and catapulting the bar.

✓ **Use the buddy system.** Spotters are a necessity on free weights to ensure you don't get the weight stuck on your neck or chest. But choose your spotter well. If you are 250 pounds and bench-pressing 300, it's probably not wise to have a spotter who weighs only 98 pounds because they aren't likely able to pull the weight off of you if necessary. It's safer to train with someone who's roughly the same weight class and strength as you.

✓ **Know your limits.** Many people try training to their ego rather than their body. They try to show off and lift more than they are capable of, which is a sure way to end up either hurt or embarrassed when you're having to have people pull weights off of you.

✓ **Stay focused.** There are plenty of distractions at the gym. But when you're working with heavy metal weights, you have to stay focused or you may end up in the emergency room.

— Tech. Sgt. David Henry
Mr. Olympia



Shudder to Shutter

First alert assignment proves unsettling for new cameraman who must photograph a fatality

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. SAMUEL BENDET

A month after I'd graduated from the technical school that officially transformed me from amateur shutterbug to professional Air Force photographer in March 2002, I received my initial alert assignment. It wasn't at all what I expected, and it gave me my first real look at how fragile life can be.

Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., was my first duty assignment after training. One day not too long after I'd arrived, my supervisor came up to me and said, "We have an alert! Grab your camera bag."

Holloman was reputed to be a quiet base, and I'd heard stories about what an "alert" shoot entailed. Usually it meant a security forces member had backed into a parking sign or a civil engineer had run over a curb. So my adrenaline really didn't get pumping when my boss notified me of the alert.

As we drove to the location of the incident, I began to do a mental checklist: camera, check; batteries, check; lenses, check; camera cards, check; flash, check ...

At the scene, security forces, emergency medical technicians, and Office of Special Investigation agents stood within a cordoned area. I followed their gaze.

There was a body on a stretcher lying next to a dump truck.

I quickly realized this was not going



Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet is now a seasoned photojournalist.

to be an ordinary assignment at sleepy Holloman AFB.

I had never photographed a corpse, nor had I seen one before this alert call. With all the training I'd done at Defense Information School in Fort Meade, Md., nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to do. With seemingly 100 eyes on me, I nervously began doing my job. I tried to steady my hands and stay emotionally detached, but I couldn't help but think about the Airman's family.

The victim, I would later find out, was Senior Airman Raoul Byrd of Adelphi, Md. This was his first day back on the job after returning from a deployment to Southwest Asia and the

ensuing two weeks of compensatory leave. He was well-liked in his unit and was known as one of the top heavy vehicle repair mechanics. He was on an emotional high the day of the mishap because he'd just reenlisted and discovered he'd received his base of preference for his next assignment.

How quickly everything can change.

About 90 minutes after Byrd was handed the keys to a 5-ton dump truck that was in for repair and routine maintenance, a co-worker found him pinned between the truck's frame and bed behind the driver's side of the cab.

He'd been crushed.

Everyone rushed to his aid, but it was too late. A physician pronounced him dead at the scene.

This was my first real introduction to mishap prevention. I was twenty-something and still felt invincible at the time. But Byrd was even younger than me. It made me question my own mortality. It made me ask how something like this could happen.

What I found out is that it proved to be a series of mistakes that led to the tragedy.

The dump truck had been brought in for maintenance by a civil engineering team member, who thought the power take off control cable, which provides hydraulic power to raise and lower the bed of the dump truck, was broken. A

“A co-worker found him pinned between the dump truck’s frame and bed behind the driver’s side of the cab.

customer service representative checked the vehicle, agreed with the assessment and processed the work order.

However, the control lever system to the dump truck’s bed actually was working; it was just installed inversely — meaning it worked the opposite of all the other dump trucks on base. This lack of standardization, and the habituation of the operators and maintainers with the more common reverse system, was deemed a contributing factor to the mishap.

So when Byrd went to pull the vehicle into the maintenance bay and thought he had the bed in the down position, the bed of the truck instead partially raised. He got out of the vehicle to inspect the problem. He made the mistake of not using the maintenance stand or some

He’d been crushed.”

other device to safely block the bed of the truck before climbing onto the back of the vehicle.

This put him into what’s known as the “crush zone.”

He then manually moved the hydraulic control valve, which was missing a screen or protective cover to deter such an activity, and the bed of the truck lowered under its own weight, trapping him against the frame.

After such a horrific mishap, you start going through the “what ifs.”

What if the maintainers or operators had known or figured out the controls simply worked in reverse order?

What if the control system had been standardized and installed the same as the rest of the dump trucks on base in the first place, instead of reverse engineered?

What if the victim had safely blocked the bed of the truck before climbing on the back?

What if there had been better communication all the way around?

What if Byrd had come into work just a day later?

The incident made me think about all the “what ifs” in my own life. I’d become complacent more than once and put myself, and probably others, at risk.

I’ve shot hundreds of jobs since that day, but that first alert will always stay with me.

It served as my wake up call. ✈



A heavy vehicle mechanic died when the bed of the 5-ton dump truck he was working on collapsed and trapped him between the bed and the frame of the truck behind the driver’s side of the cab. More than one error cost the Airman his life.



HYPOBARIC CHAMBER

A console crew flies the altitude chamber under the close supervision of Lt. Col. Lance Annicelli (back left), a U.S. Air Force instructor, and Col. Camilo Bernal (right), the Colombian air force flight director.



GETTING HIGH IN COLOMBIA

Instructors assist South American forces

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. SAMUEL BENDET



In Bogota, Columbia, about 8 million people are nestled high in the Andes Mountains at more than 8,600 feet above sea level. That makes the Colombian air force's newly installed aerospace physiology altitude chamber facility, or the *comando aero de transporte*, the highest in the world.

So when a three-man U.S. Air Force mobile training team spent two weeks this summer in Bogota helping to train Colombian forces to safely stand up the only aerospace physiology chamber facility in the country, it gave new meaning to "high altitude chamber."

The team was led by Lt. Col. Lance Annicelli, 359th Aerospace-Medicine Squadron Aerospace and Operational Physiology Training Flight commander at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. Annicelli was chosen to lead the team because of his experience as head of the busiest altitude chamber and aerospace physiology flight in the Air Force.

The colonel was flanked by his hand-chosen aerospace and operational physiology technicians, Tech. Sgts. Paul Hankins from Aviano Air Base, Italy, and Augustus Evans, Moody AFB, Ga. Together they provided training and demonstration in the safe operations of the hypobaric chamber.

In the altitude chamber, students must be able to recognize and recover from hypoxia symptoms to meet training requirements, such as the proper procedures for activating their life support gear oxygen systems within the chamber, Annicelli said.

The U.S. contingent instructed the Colombians on altitude chamber maintenance, start-up procedures, life support equipment and safety procedures in the chamber.

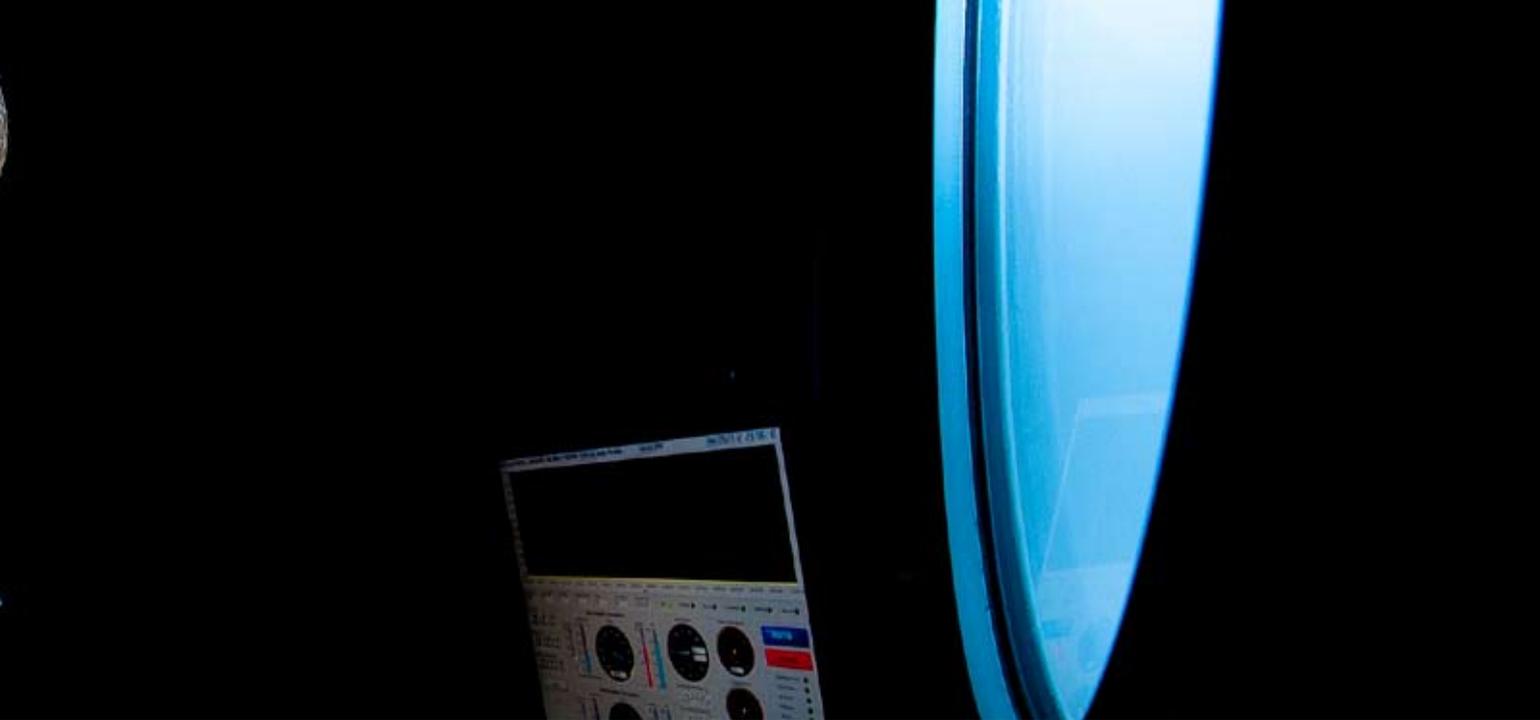


Inside the altitude chamber, Colombian and U.S. crewmembers make final recommendations to students who are preparing for a chamber flight. Their assistance in the process helps reduce the risk of decompression sickness.

"One of my biggest challenges during the deployment was to ensure our instruction was being accurately translated," Annicelli said.

Since 1970, Colombian pilots and physiologists have trained at the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks City-Base, Texas, and Randolph AFB. But the Colombian Air Force is a nation that is making strides to become more independent with their flying program, and that's why they had their own chamber built, said Lt. Col. Charles Gerstenecker, military group mission chief in Bogota.

"When I was at SOUTHCOM (Southern Command), our big focus was to create regional centers so that we can assist Latin American countries in helping themselves," he said.



“Colombia is trying to improve the human performance of its pilots, physicians and all crewmembers in the Colombian air force and military.”

The Colombian air force, for example, was paying close to \$250,000 annually to have their aircrews sent to Randolph to be certified on the altitude chamber, Gerstenecker said. Once their new chamber is certified, other partner nations like Peru, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay will be able to send their students there, versus sending them all the way to the United States for their training needs, he added.

Today, the Colombian air force has around 3,000 pilots and crewmembers made up of both enlisted and officers. They will require chamber training every five years, said Col. Camilo Bernal, director of the aeromedical certification office at Colombia’s Aerospace Medicine Center.

“Colombia is trying to improve the human performance of its pilots, physicians and all crewmembers in the Colombian air force and military,” Bernal said.

He said they see the potential for research and development through hypobaric environments for such safety concerns as hypoxia, spatial disorientation and night vision — with or without night-vision goggles.

“Right now, we don’t have the in-between — that is, the (chamber) technicians or even aerospace physiologists,” Bernal said. “So what we are doing here in Colombia is creating these positions and career paths to meet our needs.”

Colombian bacteriologist Maj. Amparo Mora serves as part of the console crew controlling the altitude chamber flight. The automated chamber system allows for both computer-aided adjustments to the altitude profile and the calibrated pressure.

In the meantime, to run the altitude chamber, they use a 20-man team consisting of highly trained flight surgeons, cardiologists, psychologists, nurses, physicians, radiologists, audiologists, sports medicine physicians and ophthalmologists, balancing both their primary professions and secondary duties.

“Our next step is to become certified by the United States Air Force so that we will be able to support our neighboring countries’ physiology requirements,” Bernal said.

They’ll simply have to ensure that the students who go to train in the world’s highest altitude chamber have time to acclimate to the thin air of the Andes. ✈



Donning an aviator oxygen mask, Colombian Maj. Alexandra Mejia, an aerospace medicine specialist, is ready for a hypobaric chamber flight.

Traveling Abroad

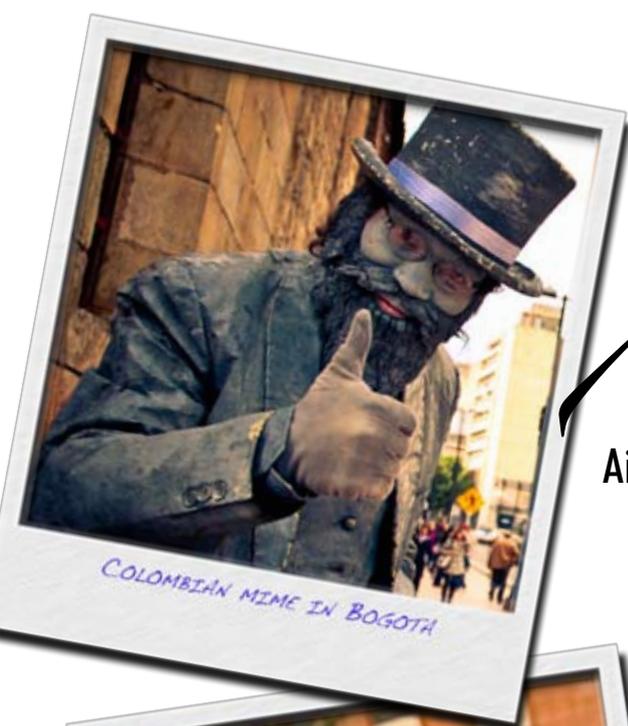
Airman deployed to a foreign country learns a few rules of the road while visiting Bogota, Colombia

Bogota, Colombia, is a city of contrasts, consisting of high-rise buildings standing next to colonial churches. It's a city of universities, theaters and shantytowns. It is a mixture of influences, Spanish, English and Indian. It's a city of great wealth and unprecedented poverty.

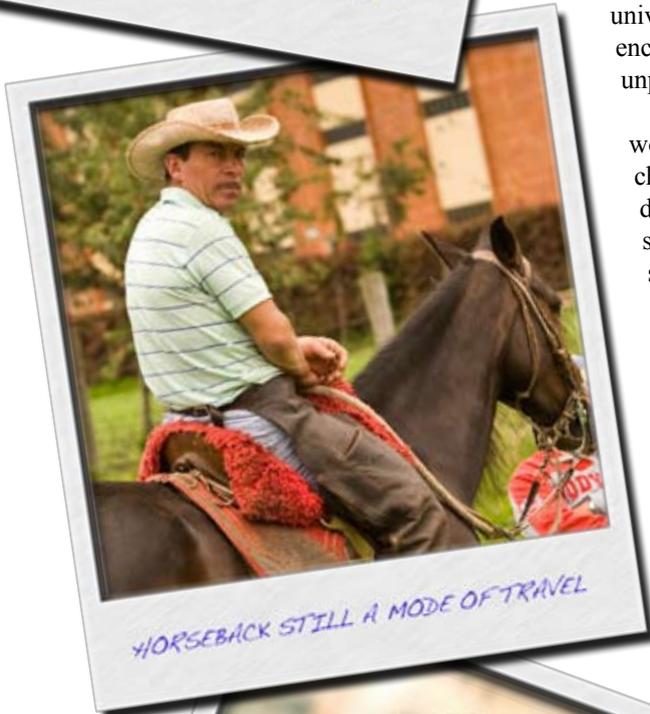
When I visited Bogota to do a story on an Air Force team working with the Colombian forces in the country's new altitude chamber in June, I was fortunate enough to be able to explore downtown and take in the local flavor. Even though I don't speak a lick of Spanish, I found the people friendly and the sights beautiful.

I was able to see some of the city's contrasts firsthand, with modern day vehicles sharing the road with a horse-drawn wagon. The wagon driver was delivering eggs to a small store with high-rise buildings marking the skyline.

To ensure my stay didn't turn into a nightmare, I followed some important tips from the U.S. State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs for those traveling in foreign lands.



COLOMBIAN MIME IN BOGOTA



HORSEBACK STILL A MODE OF TRAVEL



ENJOYING ROASTED CORN ON THE COB



WITH A POPULATION OF 8 MILLION, 80% OF BOGOTANOS USE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DAILY

◆ With an altitude of 8,600 feet above sea level, you should take it easy for a day or two in Bogota and drink lots of water to avoid altitude sickness.

◆ While the water isn't really an issue in Colombia, it's never a bad idea to stick to bottled water in foreign countries.

◆ As much as possible, plan to stay in larger hotels that have more elaborate security. Safety experts recommend booking a room from the second to seventh floors above ground level — high enough to deter easy entry from outside, but low enough for fire equipment to reach. Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room.

◆ Use reputable taxi drivers that your hotel recommends. I used a driver to haul me around the city. That kept me from driving on roads that I was unfamiliar with, not to mention traffic conditions. That also left me with a built-in translator. Traffic laws in many foreign countries, including speed limits, are often ignored and rarely enforced, creating dangerous conditions for drivers and pedestrians in major cities.

◆ Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand. Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

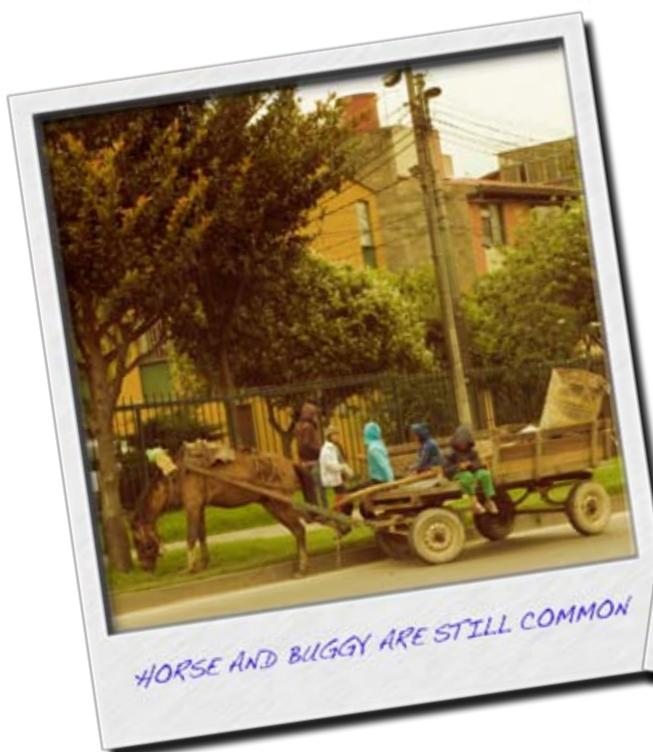
◆ Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so you can signal your need for police or medical help.

◆ Avoid street vendor food. I sampled many delicious foods, such as patacones (green plantains squashed into thick pancakes and deep fried). But to avoid intestinal distress, I shied away from street vendor eats, which can easily become contaminated. Because while street vendors were plenty, doctors were not.

◆ When there is a choice of airport or airline, ask your travel agent about comparative safety records.

◆ Check the State Department's Web site for travel advisories for the country you're visiting: travel.state.gov.

— Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet



HANGAR
FLYING

ADAPTING TO FATIGUE

By **EDWARD L. LINCH**
Photo composite by **DAVID M. STACK**



Have you ever been airborne and felt like you desperately needed a set of toothpicks to hold your eyelids open? In today's 24/7 society, it's easy to feel trapped by fatigue with no options since mission accomplishment is the priority. However, there is a solution. You can avoid the trap and adapt to fatigue while accomplishing the mission successfully.

Adaptive Airmanship

Adaptive airmanship starts with knowledge of yourself, the threat (fatigue, in this case), your aircraft, and the environment followed by the ability to recognize and understand how each one directly affects you, and then a proactive and disciplined plan of action to adapt and control. Reality doesn't always match the plan so anticipate changes, be flexible, and use all alternative resources to recover and survive.

Knowledge of the Threat

Fatigue, resulting from sleep deprivation and/or disrupted circadian rhythms, can put you in a drunken state of mind because it shortens attention spans; increases susceptibility to spatial disorientation; reduces your situational awareness; and causes apathy, task saturation, error prone performance, poor judgment/decision making, and deadly micro-sleep events. Micro-sleep is one of our body's natural defense mechanisms causing us to initiate sleep without consent, awareness or knowledge ... just a blank stare and not processing external stimuli.

How It Affects You

The first step in combating fatigue in the cockpit is recognizing and admitting its existence. One of the symptoms of fatigue is denial that it exists. It's an insidious threat and can creep up on you without warning. The ability to understand your body and the discipline to listen to it, will determine how you react to fatigue.

Common symptoms warning us of the onset of fatigue are:

- You fixate, stare off into space, and can't get or stay focused.
- You forget to execute basic tasks.
- You feel behind the aircraft, and your reactions are slow.
- Judgment and decision-making capability are degraded.
- You disregard critical information.
- Navigation, check list, and/or fuel calculation errors occur.
- You miss or make improper radio calls.
- Loud noises are irritating and distracting.
- Your sense of humor changes.

The Plan of Action

Fatigue is the by-product of the life as an aviator, and we have to learn to adapt and mitigate the threat via countermeasures. I've learned that the only way to survive in this business is to have a proactive, focused and disciplined plan of action that applies my knowledge and my understanding of fatigue.

Sleep: The first step in my plan is to get quality sleep. Use of sleep aids such as an eye mask, earplugs, white noise and/or a hot shower might be required. White noise provides a constant stimula-

tion to the brain and keeps unwanted noises masked, such as that noisy hotel guest or the aircraft taking off just outside your window. Get the sleep and naps that you can and then continue mitigating fatigue with other countermeasures.

Food and drink: The things we eat and drink can pick us up or slow us down. I try to eat nutritious meals and snacks with little or no refined sugar plus remain hydrated with water or a sugar-free electrolyte drink. I personally stay away from all carbonated beverages. Strategic consumption of caffeine restores vigilance, alertness, and can even increase your G-tolerance; however, avoid caffeine if you're already alert. You might be able to pinpoint the best nutrition plan for your type of flying by avoiding foods that make you tired and sluggish. Remember, we determine how we look, feel and perform by the way we treat our bodies. Don't let a temporary satisfaction interfere with your long-term well being.

Exercise: Get the body moving even if it's a quick 20-minute stroll after dinner, a fast-paced walk to the gym or stretching while taking a break in-flight. A well-rounded workout program (a mix of cardio, strength training and stretching) increases your strength,

endurance, mobility, long-term health, deep sleep and resistance to fatigue. The more oxygen that runs through your veins, brain and muscles, the more energized you'll feel and the more you'll be alert with no urge to nap in the cockpit.

Lifestyle: I avoid alcohol, nicotine and self medication. Alcohol can disrupt and hinder proper sleep, nicotine is a stimulant and can inhibit sleep, and self meds have side effects such as altered sleep and decreased performance.

Recover and Survive

If fatigue gets the best of you before you're able to adapt, you have to pull yourself together and take action with additional countermeasures to recover and survive.

The first priority is to maintain aircraft control. If you're in a cockpit with more than one pilot, pass the controls and take a nap. Other fatigue countermeasures include eating bite-size protein/fruit snacks, consuming additional caffeine, an active conversation, stretching and even cold water in the face. As a last resort if you can't land, yelling at yourself or a sip of Tabasco hot sauce can be effective short-term aids for staying alert and surviving.

Despite modern science, technology and medicine, much is still unknown about fatigue, sleep and circadian rhythms. However, we do know that food is fuel, exercise energizes, and sleep restores. Food is our fuel for life and fighting fatigue. A balanced exercise program (cardio, strength and stretching) is essential to staying alert. Proper sleep at the right time will restore your body.

Pilots and other aircrew members must take responsibility for managing life in balance in order not to negatively impact the flight and/or the mission. By knowing the threat and recognizing your personal symptoms, you'll be able to plan and take action before it becomes a factor as you smartly push the envelope to get the flight and mission completed safely.

Retired Lt. Col. "Ned" Linch served as an F-16 instructor pilot and is the former chief of 12th Air Force Flight Safety. These days he fights fatigue as a 737 airline pilot based in Los Angeles.

“The first step in combating fatigue in the cockpit is recognizing and admitting its existence.”

NEW EJECTION SEAT ADDED TO T-38

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE
BASE, Texas (AETCNS) —

The T-38 Talon is receiving an upgrade that officials said will improve aircrews' safety and comfort.

Representatives from Martin-Baker Aircraft Co. Inc. are in the early stages of installing their new escape systems in all T-38Cs at Randolph AFB after completing the same project at Laughlin AFB, Texas, the first of five Air Education and Training Command installations scheduled for the upgrade.

One of the greatest advantages of the new seat, called the Mk US16T, is that it functions well in the situation that accounts for most ejections, said Rick French, an AETC T-38 program manager.

"The old ejection seat has the least capability in the flight regime where the most ejections occurred, the low-altitude, low-air-speed range, because it takes a few seconds for the parachute to open when you leave the aircraft," French said.

"The best part of the new seat is that it's a zero-zero seat," said Rey Gutierrez, a 12th Operations Support Squadron aircrew flight equipment instructor. "It will eject at zero altitude and zero airspeed, so the aircrew can bail out on the ground."

The new seat provides rapid deployment of the parachute following ejection, French said.

"When the seat clears the aircraft, explosives deploy the parachute," he said. "It's almost instantaneous."

A bonus for aircrew members is that they no longer have to carry their 45-pound parachutes to the aircraft because each one is part of the ejection seat, enclosed in a container called the head box. Their only requirement is to wear a 5-pound harness that attaches to the ejection seat. The parachute itself, an aeroconical design, incorporates multiple safety features.

Another feature, the inter-seat sequencing system, which has a selector box with three options, decreases the possibility of aircrew collision during ejection and potential aircrew burn because the rear seat will always eject first, no matter which crew member pulls the seat firing handle located on the front of the seat.

Another advantage of sequencing "is that the rear seat ejects up and to the right, and the front seat ejects up and to the left, so a collision is unlikely," Gutierrez said.



Strapping into the new T-38C ejection seat, Maj. Bryan France, 435th Flying Training Squadron, connects his harness, while Rey Gutierrez, 12th Operational Support Squadron, talks through the procedures. The seat has several new safety features, which will improve aircrew survivability.

In addition, the seat decreases the potential of injury to aircrew members, especially at higher airspeeds, because its thigh and ankle restraints keep them more secure. It also expands the population who can fly the T-38 to anyone from 103 to 245 pounds because the seat has two positions, including one that moves it one inch forward.

"Now the seat can better accommodate smaller pilots," French said. "The old seat accommodates 58 percent of female pilots; the new seat brings that percentage up to 87 percent."

The seat's other features include a survival kit with a radio, flares, a mirror, a first aid kit, water, a flashlight and other items, as well as fittings that allow for a faster release of the parachute canopy, Gutierrez said.

The T-38 has been a part of the Air Force's fleet for nearly 50 years.

— Robert Goetz
502nd Air Base Wing OL-B Public Affairs

INSUFFICIENT SPEED DURING LANDING LEADS TO **PREDATOR CRASH**



by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson

When an MQ-1B Predator crashed April 20, the mishap destroyed the aircraft, a Hellfire training missile and a runway light for a total loss of nearly \$3.7 million in government property. The remotely piloted aircraft was flying a training mission at Southern California Logistics Airport at the time of the mishap.

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS) — Pilot error caused the crash of an MQ-1B Predator at Southern California Logistics Airport during an April 20 training mission, according to an Air Combat Command Accident Investigation Board report released Aug. 20.

The Predator was an Air National Guard aircraft from the 163rd Reconnaissance Wing at March Joint Air Reserve Base, Calif., operated by members of the 3rd Special Operations Squadron under the supervision of instructors from the 163rd Operations

Group Formal Training Unit, also based at March JARB.

While no injuries occurred as a result of the accident, the aircraft and one inert Hellfire training missile were a total loss. The estimated damage to government property, including a runway light, is valued at about \$3.7 million.

According to the report's investigators, the crash was caused by a student pilot's failure to recognize the aircraft's speed was too low for the weather conditions and aircraft configuration.

Insufficient speed during final approach caused a stall from which the student pilot and his instructor were unable to recover. This resulted in a hard landing that exceeded design limitations for the aircraft. Upon impact, the left wingtip dragged on the ground, causing the aircraft to leave the prepared runway surface and subsequently break apart.

Unexpectedly difficult wind conditions at the field during the landing contributed to the mishap, officials said.

INVESTIGATORS REVEAL DETAILS OF **E-4B MISHAP**



by Tech. Sgt. Jerry Morrison

Increased pitch angle by the pilot during landing of an E-4B led to the tail of the aircraft striking the runway, according to investigators. Cost to repair the aircraft is estimated at \$3.1 million.

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (ACCNS) — Increased pitch angle by the pilot landing an E-4B aircraft was the cause of the tail striking the runway May 12 at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., according to the Air Combat Command Accident Investigation Board report released Aug. 20.

The tail of the aircraft impacted the runway between 2 to 3 feet right past the centerline. The pilot and crew brought the aircraft to a stop when they saw a bright flash at the second touchdown. The tail of the aircraft and the lower fuselage sustained damages.

According to the report, the board found major factors that significantly contributed to the accident included misperception of the operational conditions in altitude, glide path and descent rate on the aircraft's short final; breakdown in visual scan during a night landing; over-controlling the input to the yoke of the aircraft; and procedural error recovery technique that resulted in too much pitch.

Estimated repair cost is approximately \$3.1 million. The pilots and crewmembers were not injured, and there was no damage to personal property.