Air Education and Training Command's
TORCH
Spring 2012

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Coming Spring of 2012

TORCH

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Cover photo by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet
Back cover composite by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet

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FROM THE
DIRECTOR

By Col. **Creig A. Rice**
AETC director of safety

SPRING FEVER

Spring is one of my favorite times of the year. In cold climates, the snow starts to melt; in the desert, the cactus are in full bloom; and in many parts of the country, you just don't know what to expect as the weather conditions can change very rapidly. Many of us dust off our bicycles and motorcycles, and even attempt to get that beach body back in shape as winter indoor activities turn into spring break on the beach.

As good as all of this is, I'm reminded that some of the most treacherous driving and flying conditions I have ever experienced happened in the spring.

One such experience occurred years ago when I was a lieutenant in Air Training Command (the predecessor to AETC). As a first assignment instructor pilot in the T-38, I was on a student cross country flight over the weekend. We were scheduled to spend the night at New Orleans Naval Air Station. The weather was forecasted to be 700 feet overcast (good enough to land ... even at night), and a front had just moved through the southeast United States.

As we arrived, we noticed things had changed; the current observation was for 300 feet and a mile visibility with rain. This was a good news, bad news story. ... The good news? The weather was good enough to shoot the approach. The bad news? The weather was good enough to shoot the approach.

"Just because something is 'legal' doesn't make it smart, or even safe."

So we started down on our precision approach radar approach, and my student was doing less than stellar. Toward the end of the approach, I took control of the aircraft, broke out of the weather at 300 feet and saw a big black hole in front of me (from the back seat no less).

Now back in the late 80s, there wasn't much lighting at Navy New Orleans ... just some standard runway lights and a "meatball" that the Navy uses for glide path guidance (think the opening scene of Top Gun and "calling the ball"). Unfortunately, the "meatball" qualified as some of the required lighting we needed to shoot an approach at night in the mighty T-38 ... another good news/bad news story.

Needless to say, we were able to make the landing and get the aircraft stopped before the end of the runway (which seemed to approach very quickly as I sucked up some seat cushion), and I probably have a few less heartbeats because of the experience.

This incident taught me a few things that I've carried with me throughout my Air Force career. First, in the springtime, the weather is always changing so be prepared for it. Second, just because something is "legal" doesn't make it smart, or even safe. We were in compliance with all of the flying regulations and rules. That said, if I had to do it all over again, I'd pass on making that approach and landing again … and get those heartbeats back.

As you read this issue, you will notice our continued emphasis on flight discipline and the need for leaders at all levels to make the right call, every time. We also take an in-depth look at some of the other common springtime activities that include, motorcycle riding and spring break/TDY binge drinking. Don't be overcome by "spring fever," and be prepared for changing conditions as we migrate to more outdoor activities.

SPITTING COFFEE

Great cover photo in the Winter 2011 issue. I saw those kids' expressions as they flew through the air on their sled and nearly spit out my coffee. Brought back a lot of good memories of some "snow days" in Montana. Very funny!

Ty Lynch
Via e-mail

HEARTBROKEN

I'm just heartbroken that Nathaniel Britt has now lost his grandpa ("Child Orphaned by Drunk Driver Now Loses Grandpa," Winter 2011, page 4). I couldn't stop crying when I read the feature "Orphaned" in the March/April 2011 issue about his parents dying. But I was so thankful he had his loving grandparents. Now with his grandfather gone, I can't imagine what is going through that 7-year-old's mind. And the poor grandmother … to lose her daughter, son-in-law and husband in such a short time … how awful. I hope people who drink and drive read these stories and see the unbearable pain they cause.

Rachel Trujillo
Phoenix

POINT, COUNTERPOINT

Point: Regarding the Ford Focus 120 mph crash test video on your Facebook page, I'd like to clarify one thing. A 120 mph impact into a stationary object is equivalent to a head-on collision of two vehicles both going 60 mph … and that could happen any day.

— Geoffrey Gibbs
Via Torch on Facebook

Counterpoint: No it isn't, fortunately. According to Newton's third law, the collision's force would be 1x per car (2x) but would also be divided per car (back to 1x). So a car going 60 mph crashing into another car going 60 would have the same effect as crashing into a wall at 60.

— Dave Soetanto
Via Torch on Facebook

LETTERS TO TORCH

Have a comment or complaint? Letters to Torch may be sent via e-mail to: torch.magazine@us.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.

NOT BUYING IT

I read the article about the scuba student almost blacking out ("Waiting to Inhale," July/August 2011 Torch, cover story), and I cannot believe this story took place as presented. First off, as a professional scuba instructor I have never left any student behind no matter what the situation (so if the instructor actually did this, he needs to be under review). And the lieutenant didn't seem to know the proper names for his scuba equipment. So I have to ask if these two young officers were ever in an actual scuba class!

The author also claims that if his partner had worn gloves, the sea urchin would not have punctured her hand. Well, I was stationed in Okinawa years ago, and we had to wear combat boots with steel liners there at low tide to walk the reefs because we had occasions where sea urchins had punctured normal boots; so I don't see how the gloves he described would have done any good here.

On the medical side, if the victim had blacked out at 30 feet, then drowning would have been the last problem for her to worry about. At that depth she could have sustained an air embolism by not exhaling the compressed air in her lungs as she was brought to the surface.

There are other "holes" in this story as well — from where they supposedly dove to how the lieutenant performed mouth-to-mouth on the surface of the water.

If ever I read a scuba story that just doesn't sound right, then this is the one!

Master Sgt. Richard J. Hoefling
Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla.

2012 TORCH CALENDAR

First, great job on the 2012 Torch Calendar. However, there are more "flyers" than just pilots in the "Fight Club." One of several flyers is the combat systems officer. CSOs can "AETC track" to the B-1B, AC-130 or F-15E Strike Eagle (all of which you show pictures of in the calendar, but fail to mention the CSOs). CSOs are still rated flyers, still part of the "fight club," still just as involved in the safety aspect of the "fight club," and still part of AETC. They played vital roles in Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and are still engaged in the fighting. CSOs deserved a cite in your calendar or at least a mention in your "forward" statement.

Don Johnson
Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.

We at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center just received the 2012 calendars, and once again you all have outdone yourselves! Great photos! Our staff consists of retired Airmen, Soldiers, Marines and civilians, and all could tell one or two stories about our aircraft and how the Air Force supported their missions in one way or another. It definitely shows how much the Air Force has had an impact on past and present engagements. I'm sure the support and impact they have will extend into the future as well. Anyway, I have always been a huge fan of Torch magazine and its contents. We always look forward to getting your publication.

Paul E. Gomez
El Paso, Texas

Just wanted to say thank you. The calendars are awesome! I've handed them out, and the feedback has been great.

Maj. Sean Gradney
Rosamond, Calif.

Your calendar is great! I love it because of all the information it contains.

Rushell Hutto
Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

Our folks (in the T-6 program) really like the calendars … they are very popular here.

Billy Doolittle
Wichita, Kan.

I have to say that everyone here was quite impressed with your calendar!

Heather J. Oben
Fort Sam Houston, Texas

The pictures in the calendar are awesome! Torch/Air Education and Training Command does a great job on these calendars! Thanks so much for sharing them with the Simulators Division.

Karen Shelley
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

Thanks for the beautiful 2012 calendar!

Donna M. Averell
Via e-mail

We use your wall calendars in our Air Force recruiting offices. Thanks!

Frank V. Hernandez
Fresno, Calif.

Thank you very much for the calendar! It fits very well into my cubicle here at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division. Your calendars have made life better for me. I will be hanging it up in September of 2012; yes, retiring with 30-plus years here at "the Lake." No matter what you hear, we in the Navy do admire all that you do in the Air Force!

Don G. Bell
China Lake, Calif.

LAUGHLIN RESPONDS TO TRAIN WRECK

Kinney County and Laughlin AFB, Texas, firefighters *decontaminate Laughlin's hazardous material responders after they completed a sweep of the crash site 11 miles east of Laughlin Feb. 7. Laughlin first responders led the initial response to the 30-car train derailment by sending a HAZMAT team to ensure the crash site was free of potentially hazardous material.*

LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — When at least 30 railroad cars derailed about 11 miles east of Laughlin Feb. 7, the Kinney County Sheriff's Office called upon experts here to assist with identifying potentially hazardous material at the scene.

Earlier that morning, Kinney County officials smelled a faint chemical odor at the scene and determined that at least one of the derailed cars was an empty tanker previously carrying chlorine. There were no injuries during the derailing.

Laughlin holds a mutual memorandum of agreement with Val Verde and Kinney Counties to offer assistance and resources during emergency situations.

"This was a Kinney County and railroad operation, and we were asked to provide assistance in the accident response in accordance with our long-standing plans," said Col. James Jinnette, 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander. "We are pleased we had the resources to support our friends in the local community during this effort."

Laughlin's hazardous material response team, comprised of Airmen from the 47th Civil Engineer Squadron and 47th Medical Operations Squadron, have the capability to respond to hazardous material situations throughout southwest Texas.

"Laughlin has never hesitated, they've always responded when we needed them to," said Kinney County Sheriff L. K. "Buddy" Burgess.

Upon arrival at the scene, the HAZMAT team set up a mobile command post at a safe location and prepared for an initial assessment of the situation.

Photos by Airman 1st Class Nathan L. Maysonet

At the staging area near the train crash site, *Staff Sgt. Curtis Billig, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, suits up in his protective gear Feb. 7.*

Prior to entering a scene, the team puts on suits designed to prevent exposure to hazardous material, said David Isbell, 47th CES assistant chief of fire prevention. Next, they enter the scene searching for leaked substances and attempt an initial identification of any material found. Upon return, the team is decontaminated, develops a plan for the next step and begins further evaluation of found material.

"We play a vital role in coming out here because there aren't many HAZMAT teams in southwest Texas, so we lend our support out to the community," said Senior Airman Taylor Manuel, 47th CES firefighter.

To be fully prepared for emergency situations, the HAZMAT team exercises varied scenarios monthly.

"This is what we're (trained and) ready for," said 2nd Lt. Gregory Arrington, 47th MDOS. "Our systems and supplies are always ready to go."

The HAZMAT team determined that the car was empty and not leaking, said Craig Alexander, 47th CES assistant chief of special operations.

Although the derailment is still under investigation, Laughlin's HAZMAT team declared the site safe from health threats, permitting Kinney County and railroad officials to safely continue with site management and cleanup.

— 2nd Lt. Angela Martin
47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

AETC SURPASSES TWO YEARS WITHOUT MOTORCYCLE FATALITY

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Air Education and Training Command has surpassed a significant safety milestone — no service member fatalities have occurred as a result of operating a motorcycle in more than two years.

The last time the command hit such a streak was Aug. 8, 1998. On that day, the no-fatalities run hit 786 days. The current record is 876 days (as of Feb. 22).

"Teamwork made this happen," said Col. Creig Rice, AETC director of safety, "Commanders set the tone, our safety offices provided training and education, our motorcycle mentorship clubs aided our inexperienced riders, and our motorcyclists exercised sound risk management. As long as leaders stay involved and individuals continue to use sound risk management, we can continue this positive trend."

The milestone resulted from the efforts of everyone involved in AETC's motorcycle safety program, from top leaders down to brand-new riders. And in that mix is a group of expert volunteers teaching the Motorcycle Safety Foundation courses located at many of the bases across AETC.

"Training is important. Motorcycle safety courses provide the basic level of safe motorcycle operation," said Bryan Bailey, 81st Training Wing Safety. He also serves as an MSF course instructor. "The basic rider's course does provide the mechanics and skills of riding a motorcycle, but more importantly, it provides the rider with a strategy on how to avoid mishaps."

by Kemberly Groue

***Motorcyclist Master Sgt. Yolanda Jerry**, 336th Training Squadron, speaks to a group of students from her squadron on the importance of motorcycle safety in front of Holbrook Manor at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., last spring.*

Motorcycle safety courses aren't the only way to keep riders alive, he said; mentorship also plays a big role.

"Mentorship is a great way to ensure this streak continues," Bailey said. "Riders should talk to other riders about the importance of making good decisions and the consequences of using bad judgment. We have a great wealth of experience out there; we need to take advantage of it."

Tech. Sgt. David Roller is an active duty motorcycle rider. He said the focus on motorcycle safety has to do with much more than policy.

"Many riders think the motorcycle safety program is just a bunch of rules written down on paper," he said. "I can assure (you) it is not. It is a people program, designed to keep our wingmen safe."

There are 4,300 Airmen in AETC who ride motorcycles, and they deserve a lot of the credit for this streak, said AETC Occupational Safety Manager Robbie Bogard.

"Our service members are better educating themselves about motorcycle safety, wearing the proper protective equipment and exercising better risk management," he said. "Hopefully, this steak will continue, especially as the peak riding seasons approach in the spring and summer."

— Staff Sgt. Clinton Atkins
Air Education and Training Command
Public Affairs

VIRTUAL WINGMAN APP COMING THIS SPRING

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Coming later this spring, Air Education and Training Command will debut an Air Force Virtual Wingman Smart Phone Application tool aimed at saving lives.

"With the smart app, Airmen will have a myriad of information available to them at the touch of their fingertips to help make good decisions and keep them out of harm's way," said Robbie Bogard, AETC's occupational safety manager. "This new tool is designed to help reduce mishaps, suicides, drinking and driving, and more."

Virtual Wingman will include the following types of information:

- Air Force suicide prevention, to include a direct line to the VA Suicide Crisis Line
- Sexual assault response coordination
- Air Force risk management
- High Risk Activities Guide
- Pre-departure safety briefings
- Wingman definition concept
- Taxi-finder
- Motorcycle safety
- Air Force news
- Airman-2-Airman safety videos
- Airman's guide for assisting personnel in distress

This Smartphone application will be a Web based product — people will have to download it from a Web site, versus the iTunes Store or Android Market, Bogard said.

Torch will publish the Web address for the application once it is ready for release. Look for it later this spring on Torch's Facebook page, Web site or hard copy magazine.

— Tim Barela

courtesy photo

***Aimed at saving lives**, the Air Force Virtual Wingman Smart Phone Application tool is scheduled to debut later this spring.*

TALES OF THE STRANGE

DEER FIGHTS BACK

HUNTER BECOMES TARGET FOR PREY

Sometimes you bag the deer; sometimes the deer bags you. ... Well, at least that's the way I have to tell it.

It was the final week of deer season and time for me to make my annual pilgrimage 60 miles south of Montgomery, Ala., down I-65 to my friend's hunting lodge in Greenville, Ala. I looked forward to this yearly outing with just the fellas — no phones, no TV, not even any basic plumbing. The trip was going as planned until late in the afternoon on the second day. As the sun began to set over the horizon, a shot rang out from across the holler (hill).

We all met back at the lodge and shared our stories of what we did and didn't see and realized one of the guys was still out. We loaded up in a truck and headed in the direction of the shot.

Just over the hill we found Donnie sitting on a stump with a puzzled look on his face. As we approached him, he said, "Hold up just a minute." He pointed to his right, and we followed his finger to a deer lying on the ground. It wasn't dead, but injured.

Donnie made a pretty nice shot right through the left shoulder. The problem was it wasn't a "kill shot," and the deer still had plenty of pep.

By this time it was dark, and we could not risk shooting again. The deer had managed to run close enough to a neighboring community, and a shot might lead someone to believe we were illegally hunting after sunset.

So we put our collective minds together and came up with a brilliant plan ... well, at least at the time it seemed brilliant.

We decided to surround the deer in an attempt to "box" it in so Donnie could straddle it and end its suffering with his trusty hunting knife.

Slowly and carefully, we surrounded the deer with flashlights in hand. The deer looked like it might welcome a quick end. Then Donnie straddled it and reached for its throat with his blade.

All hell broke loose.

Apparently the deer was playing possum or simply had second thoughts about crossing over to the great beyond. For suddenly, with a burst of strength and speed that startled us all, it sprang up and bolted ... directly toward me!

"Apparently the deer was playing possum ... suddenly, with a burst of strength and speed, it sprang up and bolted ... directly toward me!"

Suddenly, I was "the deer in headlights."

I regained my wits in time to jump to my right. But the deer darted the same way and took out my knees, much like a linebacker crushing a running back.

As the deer clipped my knees out from under me, I fell over a stump and landed with a hard thud on the cold, wet ground.

With our would-be prey scampering off into the darkness, I arose gingerly to the hardy laughter of my "buddies." I began laughing too as the strange situation reminded me of a Three Stooges episode I saw as a child.

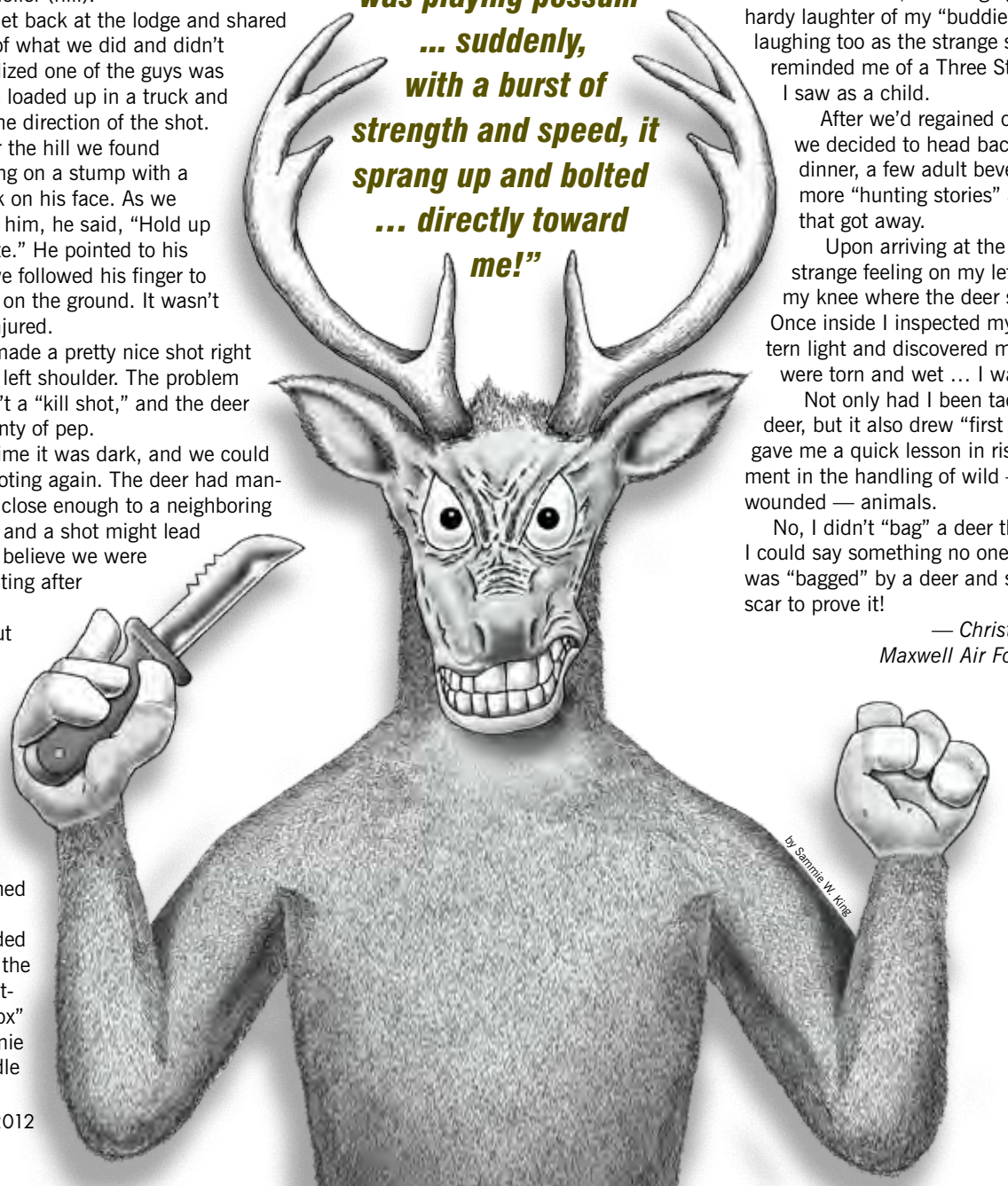
After we'd regained our composure, we decided to head back to camp for dinner, a few adult beverages and more "hunting stories" about the one that got away.

Upon arriving at the lodge, I felt a strange feeling on my left leg around my knee where the deer struck me. Once inside I inspected my knee by lantern light and discovered my camo pants were torn and wet ... I was bleeding!

Not only had I been tackled by a deer, but it also drew "first blood" and gave me a quick lesson in risk management in the handling of wild — and wounded — animals.

No, I didn't "bag" a deer that trip. But I could say something no one else could. I was "bagged" by a deer and still have the scar to prove it!

— Christopher Haisten
Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.



PRO BASEBALL PLAYERS, AIRMEN AND 'THE EDGE'

BEWARE OF THE DANGERS OF SUPPLEMENTS

With spring training kicking off for professional baseball players in late February, it's a good time to point out that professional athletes and Airmen share more similarities than they may realize.

Consider the approach they take to their respective professions. First, both populations must conform to physical fitness standards. To be an effective asset to their team, members of both may seek human performance enhancement tools. Essentially, Airmen and athletes alike are looking for "the edge." Some hope to find that edge in the $20-plus billion dietary supplement industry. However, members of either organization must temper their eagerness to excel with their susceptibility to random urinalysis testing and, for aviators, the potential performance diminishing effects (see "Reduced G-Tolerance Associated with Supplement Use," below).

Also, like the average ball player, Airmen may be ignorant to the fact that dietary supplements purchased at trusted retailers, even those on Air Force bases, may threaten their health and careers. For example, a *Consumer Reports* article in July 2010, titled "Protein Drinks: Athletes Criticism," reports that in 2005, a National Football League running back temporarily used a well-known protein powder supplement. Subsequently, he tested positive for a banned steroid nandrolone, because of the presence of undisclosed ingredients. An independent lab analysis of the protein powder revealed the presence of norandrostenedione and androstenediol in the supplement, both steroid precursors.

Walking through an on-base store, I spotted the same protein powder used by the NFL player.

How could this happen?

First of all, the 1994 Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act states that manufacturers need not register their products with the Food and Drug Administration nor get FDA approval before producing or selling dietary supplements. To make matters more interesting, the FDA will only take action against an unsafe dietary supplement after it reaches the market.

Thus, we, the consumers, become the free, willing and *paying* human test subjects.

The Air Force, however, has a more conservative approach to supplementation, especially when pertaining to the specialized undergraduate pilot training population. According to the "Official Air Force Approved Aircrew Medications" list (May 2011), dietary, herbal and nutritional supplements only can be used with the approval of a flight surgeon. Furthermore, the "Air Force Trainee Health Work Group Dietary Supplement Use Recommendation" (February 2010) recommends that all Airmen in training status be prohibited from using any dietary supplements. Exceptions to this ban only are supplements prescribed or administered by a military medical professional, multivitamins, and protein supplements with soy, whey or casein protein as the only active ingredient.

Bottom line, the nature of the supplement industry simply does not merit the amount of trust consumers place on it. When it comes to supplementation, ask a medical professional first. Not only does Air Force guidance demand it, the costs of supplementation outweigh any potential "edge." Plus, flight docs will tell you the medical truth … and they don't get a sales commission.

Article by Capt. Michael Bolduc, aerospace and operational physiologist with the 14th Medical Operations Squadron at Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., and former strength and conditioning coach of the Los Angeles Angels and Cincinnati Reds. Maj. Maria Elena Gomez-Herbert, also an aerospace and operational physiologist from Columbus, contributed to this article.

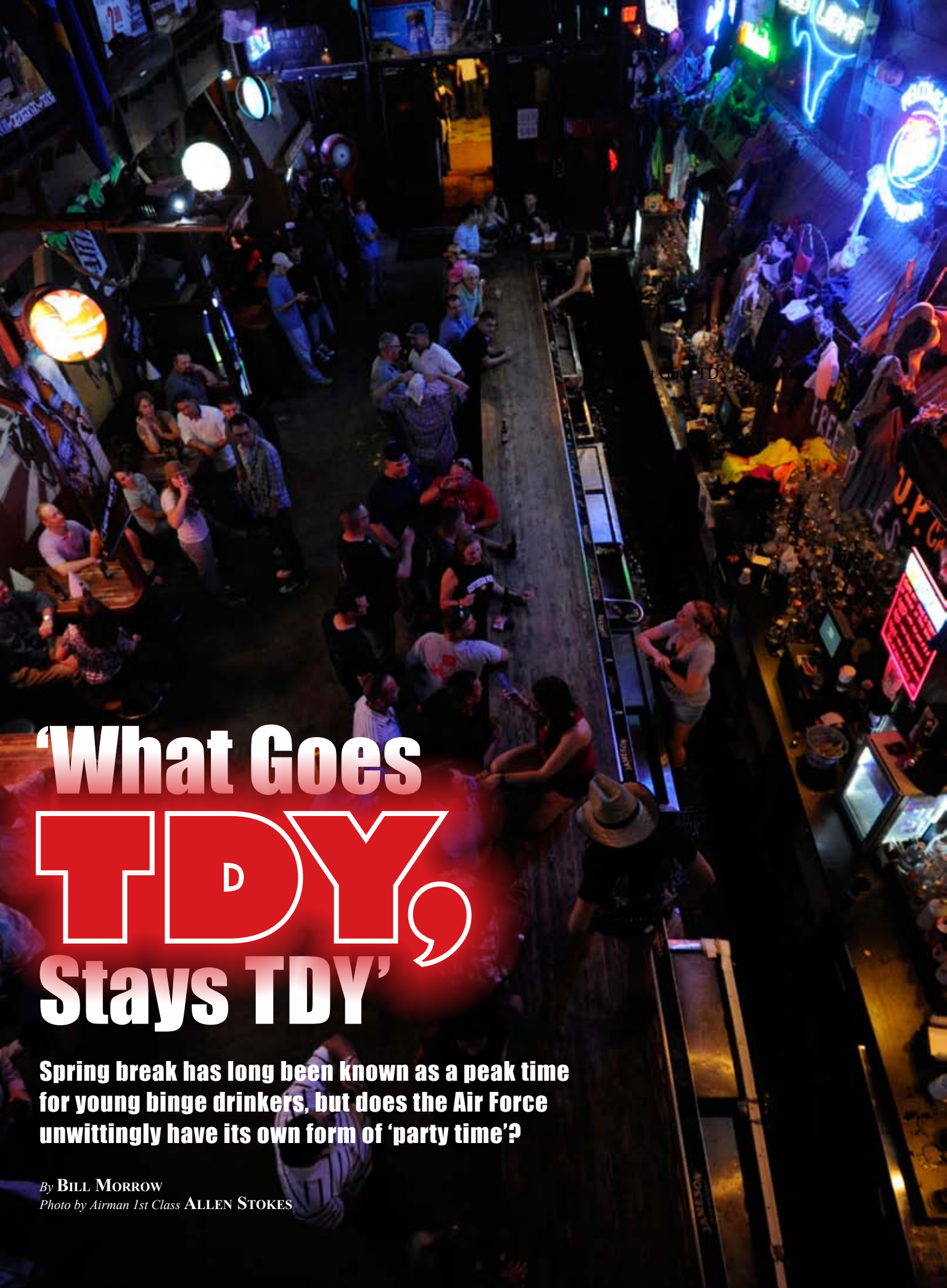
REDUCED G-TOLERANCE ASSOCIATED WITH SUPPLEMENT USE

A case report titled "Reduced G-Tolerance Associated with Supplement Use" published in the February 2011 *Journal of Aviation, Space and Environmental Medicine*, expounds upon the performance risks associated with supplements specific to high performance aircrew.

The case study involved a seasoned fighter pilot who experienced two episodes of visual degradation under moderate G load (4 to 5 Gs). The flight doc's medical evaluation revealed none of the usual factors associated with diminished G tolerance (dehydration, fatigue, poor diet, lack of exercise or illness) but did identify that the fighter pilot started a regimen of Vitamin B, Niacin and CoEnzyme Q10 two weeks prior to experiencing the event.

The combination of Niacin and CoEnzyme Q10 supplements caused an overall reduction in blood pressure and vascular resistance (Niacin is purported to reduce blood pressure, while CoEnzyme Q10 can lead to vasodilation effects). While a person with high blood pressure may seek these supplements to lower blood pressure, a fighter pilot (under G) needs both higher blood pressure and increased peripheral vascular resistance for adequate protection from effects of positive Gs.

— Capt. Michael Bolduc
Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.



‘What Goes TDY, Stays TDY’

Spring break has long been known as a peak time for young binge drinkers, but does the Air Force unwittingly have its own form of ‘party time’?

By Bill Morrow
Photo by Airman 1st Class Allen Stokes

"You'll never become old and wise … if you're never young and crazy."

I read that saying on a T-shirt recently, and it got me to thinking. I wonder if the same person who came up with that bit of philosophy also invented "spring break" and coined the phrase, "What goes TDY, stays TDY."

Because, in the end, all are just a pretext to party hardy or to excuse bad decisions or behavior.

Admittedly, I have a backlog of young and crazy — enough to give an insurance company pause. And I've come to the conclusion that my making it to "old and wise" relied way too much on pure, dumb luck.

Take spring break, for example. I grew up in Florida, and there's many a weekend of booze and debauchery from my youth spent in Daytona Beach that I don't remember. The legal drinking age was 18 back in the day, and alcohol burned those brain cells like the slowest member of a herd of wildebeests being stalked by a pack of lions. It's a good thing the alcohol edited many of my memories from that time of my life, because some of the things I do remember still make me turn crimson.

Why do some people who drink too much forget or experience blackouts? The part of the brain called the hippocampus can stop working when someone over indulges with alcohol. The hippocampus acts like a VCR. It records what a person does and gives the person the ability to play it back again in his or her mind. A drunken person can still walk, talk and make decisions — they just may not have a memory of it the next day. So you might not only forget who you had sex with the night before, you might not even realize you ran somebody over with your pickup truck.

"(When drunk) you might not only forget who you had sex with the night before, you might not even realize you ran somebody over with your pickup truck."

In the military service we don't have a spring break as such, but there are times when we aren't on our best behavior, such as when TDY (temporary duty). As mentioned earlier, the phrase "What goes TDY, stays TDY" has been used many times as a cover for bad behavior away from home base.

Much of this bad behavior is caused by binge drinking.

Binge drinking is a pattern of drinking alcoholic beverages that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration to .08 grams percent or above, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. This typically happens when men consume five or more drinks and when women consume four or more drinks in two hours or less. (It takes women longer to metabolize alcohol because they tend to have more body fat.)

Being alcohol-impaired affects decision-making and slows reaction time, which in turn, increases the chances of getting hurt or hurting others in everything from car crashes and boating mishaps to violence and suicide.

Adding to this problem is that many young "bingers" aren't experienced drinkers — not that that is the goal. Nevertheless, inexperienced drinkers typically have a lower tolerance for alcohol and have no clue what their limitations are.

This is where using too much alcohol as a recreational activity can have another ill effect: alcohol poisoning.

Alcohol poisoning is a serious consequence of drinking large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time (binge drinking).

by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet

Binge drinking is considered *five or more alcoholic beverages for men and four or more for women in less than two hours, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.*

Drinking too much too quickly can potentially lead to coma and death. Alcohol depresses the nerves that control involuntary actions such as breathing, heartbeat and your gag reflex, which keeps you from choking. Drinking too much alcohol can slow and, in some cases, shut down these functions. Your body temperature also can drop so low it can lead to cardiac arrest. And your blood sugar level can fall enough to cause seizures.

Alcohol poisoning can result in a quiet death that comes with sleep in the believed safety and security of one's own bed in one's own room. … No screeching tires, no groan of metal on metal, no wide-eyed screaming in fear.

Living in a single room, a drunken Airman could start to choke to death on his own vomit with no hope of rescue.

Or an alcohol poisoning death could just be the soft rustle of blankets and sheets as they're pulled up to keep you warm, tucked under your chin, smelling lightly of fabric softener. You'll need that blankey as your body temperature has already dropped, along with your breathing rate. You don't and won't know what's going on as your brain is on vacation, sedated by the booze. The embrace of a dark room, familiar with the contents of your life — a laptop, a stereo, the "toys" you've acquired — all left behind to be boxed up and sent to next of kin.

"Living in a single room, a drunken Airman could start to choke to death on his own vomit with no hope of rescue."

Alcohol is an equal opportunity killer if abused. From a pop star in a nightclub, to a college student on spring break, to an Airman TDY, no one is immune.

Our own Air Force has seen the loss of Airmen as a result of too much to drink, whether from alcohol poisoning or mishaps. It's also seen its members injured while drunk — from common trips and falls, to flaming shots that didn't quite make it past the lips and splashed on the face and neck.

The Air Force recommends using the 0-0-1-3 philosophy when drinking. The first "0" stands for zero drinks for those younger than 21. The second "0" represents zero driving under the influence offenses. The "1" stands for one drink per hour to give the liver enough time to process the alcohol. And the "3" symbolizes a maximum of three drinks per night to keep the body's blood alcohol level below .05 percent. But, remember, this is not a guide to safe driving. The best practice is if you drink any alcohol, don't drive.

Once someone finishes an alcoholic drink, it takes a while for it to enter the bloodstream and hit peak blood alcohol level. The liver processes one ounce of alcohol an hour. Ninety percent of alcohol is processed by the liver, and 10 percent comes out through one's breath, urine and sweat as the alcohol is burned up as energy.

Most people pass out at a .21 blood alcohol level. When a person has stopped drinking and goes to sleep, their blood alcohol level continues to rise for one to two hours after they stop drinking.

Alcohol abuse is the third largest public health problem, after heart disease and cancer. It is involved in 50 percent of all fatal traffic mishaps and homicides and 25 percent of all suicides.

That said, I'm not going to try to tell you never to drink. But take it from someone who was once "younger and crazier" and who is now "older and wiser": When you do drink, do so responsibly. Don't get lured into drinking games. Don't drink and drive. And be a good wingman.

Mr. Morrow is the chief of the safety career field management team at Headquarters Air Force Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. Senior Airman Cassandra Locke, 43rd Wing Public Affairs, and Tech. Sgt. Michelle Wilson, 43rd Medical Group, Pope AFB, N.C., contributed to this article.

by Airman 1st Class Allen Stokes

***Although college students commonly binge drink**, 70 percent of binge drinking episodes involve adults age 26 years and older, according to a recent national survey.*

Going on a Binger?

New estimates from national surveys show that binge drinking is a bigger problem than previously thought. More than 38 million U.S. adults binge drink about four times a month, and the largest number of drinks per binge is on average eight. This behavior greatly increases the chances of getting hurt or hurting others from car crashes, violence and suicide. Drinking too much, including binge drinking, causes 80,000 deaths in the United States each year.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration to .08 grams percent or above. This typically happens when men consume five or more drinks and when women consume four or more drinks in two hours or less.

Most people who binge drink are not alcohol dependent.

According to the surveys,

✦ Although college students commonly binge drink, 70 percent of binge drinking episodes involve adults age 26 years and older.

✦ The prevalence of binge drinking among men is higher than among women.

✦ Binge drinkers are 14 times more likely to report alcohol-impaired driving than non-binge drinkers.

✦ About 90 percent of the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 in the United States is in the form of binge drinks.

✦ About 75 percent of the alcohol consumed by adults in the United States is in the form of binge drinks.

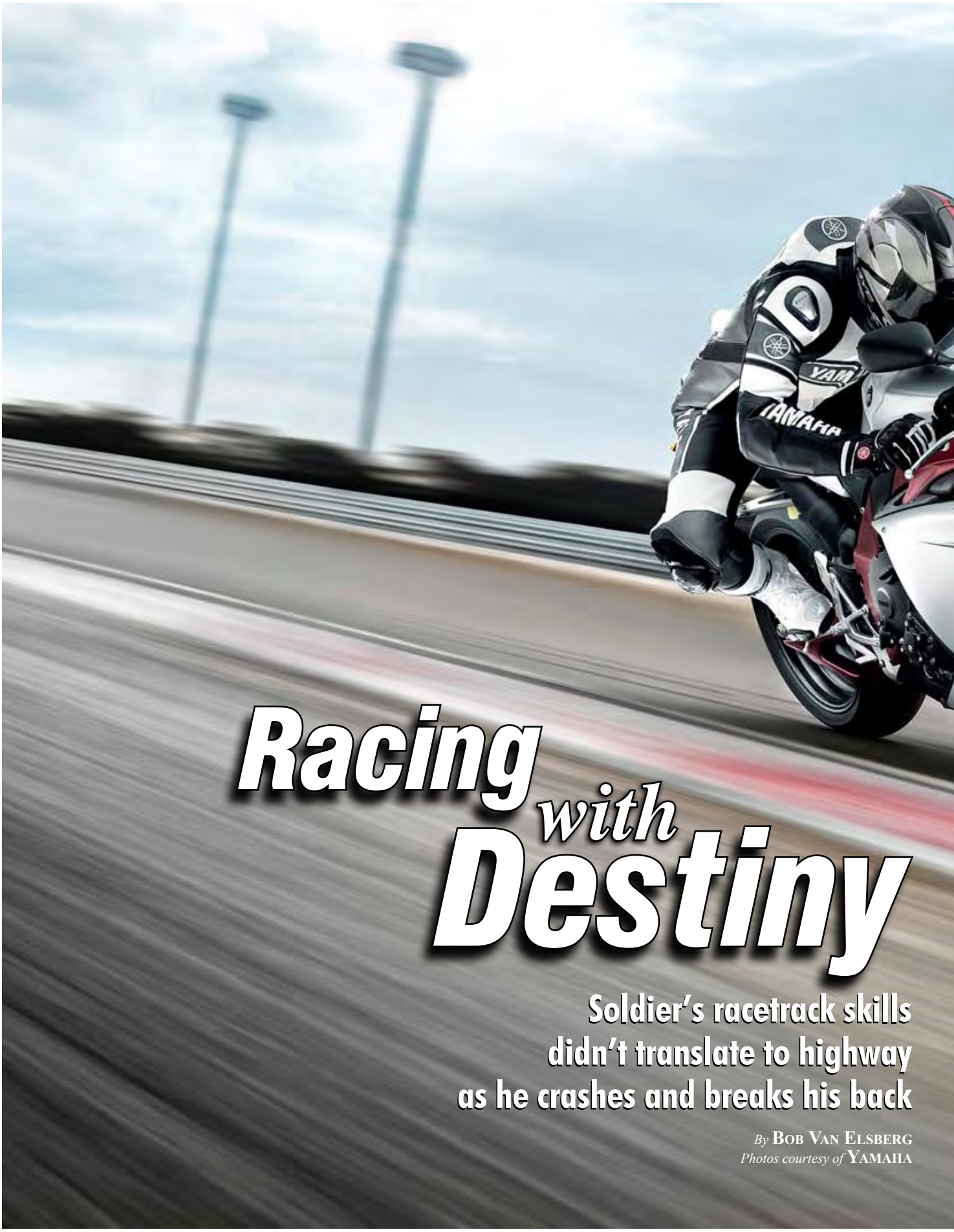
✦ The proportion of current drinkers that binge is highest in the 18- to 20-year-old group (51 percent).

✦ Binge drinking is associated with many health problems, including unintentional injuries (e.g., car crashes, falls, burns, drowning); intentional injuries (e.g., firearm injuries, sexual assault, domestic violence); and alcohol poisoning.

— Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet

***Drinking too much**, including binge drinking, causes 80,000 deaths in the United States each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*



Racing with Destiny

Soldier's racetrack skills didn't translate to highway as he crashes and breaks his back

By **Bob Van Elsberg**
Photos courtesy of **Yamaha**

A Soldier was riding a 2005 Yamaha YRF-R1 sport bike *when he lost control and crashed on a highway onramp.*

It's hard to resist rolling the throttle when you're straddling a motorcycle that can go from zero to 100 mph in less than six seconds. But that's what Army Staff Sgt. William Whiteside's potent 2005 Yamaha YZF-R1 sport bike could do.

In 2007, the Soldier had been racing on a MotoGP track in Jerez, Spain, close to his assignment in Rota. Fastforward to Nov. 1, 2008, stateside. He exited Highway 167 North in Renton, Wash., onto the onramp to Interstate 405 North when he encountered some easy curves and a decent straightaway. With 165 horsepower at his fingertips and an agile bike, the onramp didn't have to be boring.

At least that's what he thought as he entered the first curve.

"I was leading the pack because I was the most experienced one out of everybody," Whiteside said. "I was wearing all of my protective equipment — all my basic stuff that I wore on the track when I raced."

Behind him were a dozen riders who'd met that morning at a motorcycle shop in Renton. It was a chilly 45 degrees as they headed out. They'd been on the road less than five minutes when they hit the interchange from Highway 167 to I-405 North. Their tires, relatively cold and hard as they started the ride, hadn't yet warmed enough to reach their optimal "stickiness," or traction, with the road. That would take a bit more time — time Whiteside didn't have as he pushed the Yamaha's performance.

Going between 65 and 75 mph as he exited Highway 167 onto the onramp, he flashed past a 45-mph speed limit sign, followed shortly thereafter by a sign recommending drivers slow to 35 mph for curves. But such recommendations, Whiteside considered, didn't reflect the agility of his R1.

Leaning left coming out of a switchback, his rear tire suddenly broke loose, sending his bike into a dangerous counterclockwise spin.

He fell back on his training and racing experience.

"If you lose traction with the rear tire, you're supposed to maintain and (if needed) increase throttle to help pull you out of the corner," he said.

Braking or slowing down, he explained, would cause the motorcycle to stand up and go straight, running him off the road.

But he couldn't regain control.

"My rear tire began coming around," he said.

The bike quickly spun until it was nearly 90 degrees to the road. The rear

tire, rapidly heating as it slid and spun against the road, suddenly gained full traction.

What happened next, Whiteside will never forget.

"It shot me over the top, and that was the end of it," he said.

The motorcycle had "high-sided," flipping to the right and violently throwing him onto the road ahead.

"After I went over the top of the handlebars, I flipped and landed on the back of my head," he said. "When that happened, it basically compressed my spine to the point it caused a compression fracture to my L1 vertebrae."

Despite his injury, Whiteside was conscious. Pumped with adrenaline, he got up and ran off the road, collapsing into a ditch. Fortunately, one of his fellow riders was a Navy corpsman. He stopped and immediately assessed his injuries while Whiteside complained of pain in his left foot and back. The corpsman and the other riders stabilized Whiteside as they awaited the ambulance.

"I was able to maintain consciousness, but I don't remember a whole lot of what happened after that," Whiteside said.

An ambulance picked up Whiteside to take him to Madigan Army Medical Center, located about 35 miles away. However, en route he lost consciousness and was transferred to another ambulance that took him to Harbor View Medical Center in Seattle. Along the way, he lost consciousness again.

When he opened his eyes again, several hours has passed. "I woke up that night in the hospital with a brace," he said.

X-rays showed he'd broken his back.

Doctors monitored him for three days to ensure his fractured disc didn't shatter. They then put him in an extensive brace with bars running down his rib cage and across his chest and stomach. He wore the brace for three months to stabilize his back while his damaged vertebrae healed.

Despite his traumatic injuries, he discovered his tightly fitting racing leathers had performed an important function.

"The doctors stated that if I hadn't been wearing my leather suit, I'd have probably been in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the waist down," Whiteside said.

The leathers, he explained, kept pressure on the damaged vertebrae, protecting

it. He added had he just been wearing a loose-fitting jacket, the disc would likely have shattered or blown out, damaging his spinal cord.

Whiteside's personal protective equipment protected him in many other ways, as well.

"My gloves were completely shredded, but there was not a single scratch on my hands," he said. "My glove's Kevlar knuckle protectors prevented my hands from being shattered."

The impact tore a chunk out of the back of his helmet, an expensive Arai model. However, a damaged helmet beat the alternative.

Whiteside said his insurance company gladly paid the nearly $5,000 to replace his riding gear, noting it was cheaper than paying for a coffin.

Surviving the accident provided him some valuable lessons learned. Although his bike could've easily handled the curves on a well-groomed racing track, riding on the street was a different matter. He lost control on a grooved road surface designed to promote rain runoff — a situation he never faced on a racetrack. Also, before racing, riders use electric heaters to warm their tires for maximum traction. Without those, it could've taken 10 to 15 minutes of riding before his tires would enjoy the same level of grip on the roads.

He simply didn't have that long.

Whiteside learned the street was not the place for riders to explore the performance of modern sport bikes. There are too many variables, any of which could suddenly send a rider out of control. And smart riders know that riding gear is no place to skimp or save money. When things go wrong, quality riding gear may be more important than a rider can imagine, the Soldier said.

"It doesn't matter if it's 5 feet from your house or a 100-mile trip; you always need your gear because you can't predict what will happen," Whiteside said.

Mr. Van Elsberg is an editor and writer with Knowledge, the official safety magazine of the Army, Strategic Communication Directorate, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, Fort Rucker, Ala.

WHAT'S BETWEEN YOU AND THE ROAD?

Staff Sgt. William Whiteside knows how important good personal protective equipment is to a rider. After all, he got the chance to wear out $5,000 worth of it in just one accident. That said, he's still alive, can walk, and count to 10 on his fingers.

As you get ready for the peak riding seasons this spring and summer, it's wise to put something durable between your head, your hide and the highway. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has the following suggestions about good riding gear.

✦ **Helmets** — Ensure they meet Department of Transportation standards, and consider a full-face model to protect your nose, cheek and chin should you hit the highway face-first. Novelty helmets shatter like cheap plastic cups, splattering their contents on highways, jersey barriers, guardrails and other objects that don't give.

✦ **Footwear** — Sturdy boots with oil-resistant, rubber-based composite soles will give you a strong grip on the pavement and help keep your feet on the motorcycle pegs. They also provide extra protection against foot and ankle injuries.

✦ **Jackets, pants and riding suits** — Gear purposefully designed to protect riders will better resist wearing through when sliding down the road in an accident and also can be cut to match the motorcyclist's riding position without binding.

✦ **Gloves** — Full-fingered gloves protect hands from blisters, wind, sun and cold and help prevent cuts, bruises and abrasions in a crash. This is especially important as the skin on the fingers is comparatively thin — and no match for asphalt.

— Bob Van Elsberg

NO CLOWNING AROUND

Pilots who knowingly break the rules are losing their flying jobs, or even worse . . . their lives

By Lt Col. **Richard Doyle**
Photos by Tech. Sgt. **Samuel Bendet**

Flying multi-million dollar aircraft at high speeds and performance is no time to clown around. But breaking the rules has cost more than one pilot his career … or life.

Case in point: The June 24, 1994, Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., B-52 bomber crash has become a classic case study in rogue behavior and the failure of leadership to correct such behavior. During an airshow practice, with a "fini" flight aircrew member on board, the pilot of the B-52 flew the aircraft into an accelerated stall with inadequate altitude to recover. The aircraft was destroyed, and all four crew members perished. The co-pilot attempted ejection, but it was too late.

The crash was captured on film and was shown repeatedly on news broadcasts throughout the world.

The accident investigation revealed at least seven prior breaches of flight discipline to include unauthorized flybys, exceeding bank and pitch limits and low-altitude deviations. Leadership was aware of the pilot's willful disregard of the rules. It was so bad that one of the squadron commanders would not allow his crewmembers to fly with the mishap pilot. That commander was the co-pilot on the fight. While there were instances of verbal reprimands, no further action was taken.

If you have been in the Air Force for any significant time, you probably have studied this mishap and might know the story by heart. But it was almost 18 years ago; this stuff doesn't happen anymore. Right?

Even though flying is already exciting, *some pilots choose to add to the "thrill" by breaking the rules or clowning around in multi-million dollar aircraft. These breakdowns in discipline continue to be a problem in the Air Force, costing some pilots their careers and others their lives.*

Two T-6 Texan II pilots from Moody AFB, Ga., died *when they crashed their plane on takeoff. The mishap investigation revealed flight discipline issues as the main contributor to the tragedy. The pilots failed to maintain a minimum safe air speed and bank angle, which resulted in an accelerated stall and complete loss of control of the training aircraft.*

Fast forward to July 27, 2004. On a cross country mission for instructor continuation training, a T-6 crew flew a two-hop to Savannah, Ga., to remain overnight. On the outbound legs, the crew flew several unauthorized and illegal low-altitude aerial maneuvers, including aileron rolls and high-speed passes, steep bank and high pitch. Three of these demonstrations occurred at altitudes as low as 50 feet, with two near family homes.

Sound familiar?

The night of the arrival in Savannah involved meeting with friends for dinner followed by drinks at a local bar. Between the five who made it to the bar, they consumed 33 alcoholic drinks. Seven of the drinks were 23 ounces. The crew paid the bar tab around 11 p.m. and departed for crew rest. At 7 a.m. the following morning, one of the crew woke the other urging for an early departure. The crew ate a light breakfast before arriving on base. No evidence of a filed flight plan was found, and the crew brushed off a friend's question of whether they needed to file a flight plan and get weather forecasts.

They performed a quick preflight around 8:50 a.m., taxied a short distance for takeoff and requested one pattern before departing to the west. On takeoff, the pilot kept the aircraft in ground effect, accelerating to 170 knots. He then executed an aggressive closed pull-up maneuver. He failed to maintain a minimum safe airspeed and bank angle, which resulted in an accelerated stall below 500 feet above ground level, and complete loss of control of the aircraft.

The front seat pilot was fatally injured during an unsuccessful ejection attempt. The aircraft was destroyed, and both crew members perished.

Sound familiar?

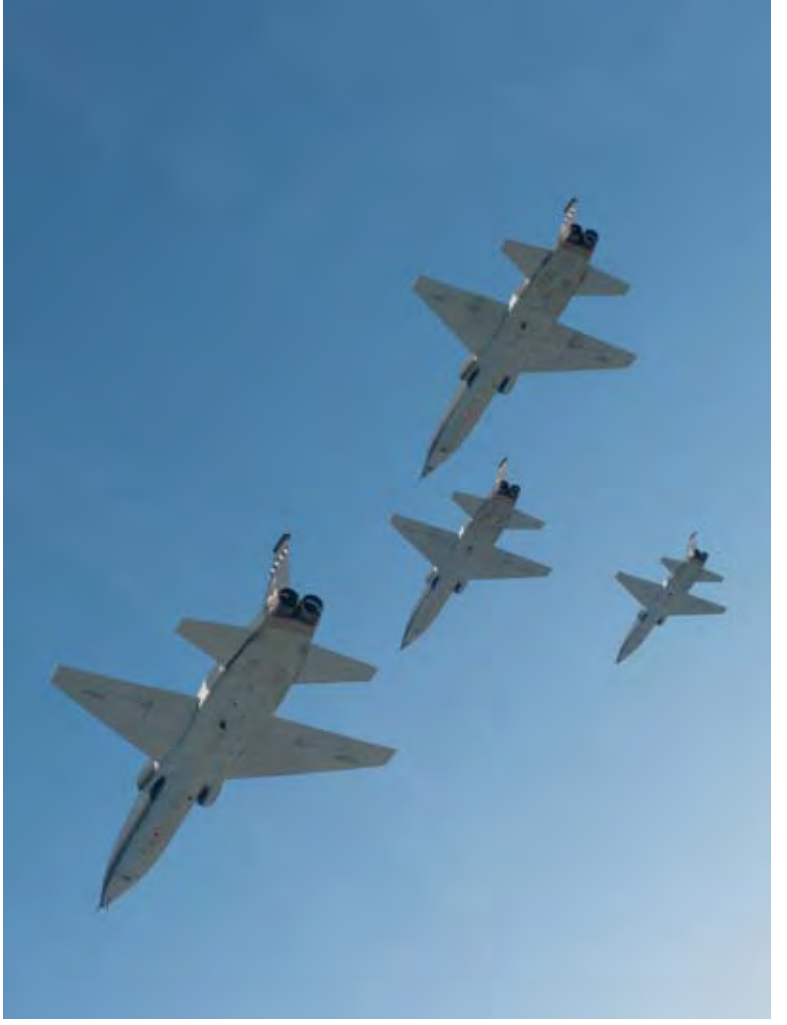
This accident is not as well known as the B-52 mishap, but is more applicable to our command. Initially the investigators had no inkling of the unauthorized flybys performed the day before the mishap. That was revealed after reviewing the Integrated Data Acquisition Reporting System when investigators had intended to view just the mishap sequence. The flybys demonstrated a complete lack of flight discipline, which continued until the mishap.

> "The crew then chose to disregard Air Force Instruction 11-202, General Flight Rules, which states aircrew shall not consume alcoholic beverages within 12 hours of take-off."

The crew then chose to disregard Air Force Instruction 11-202, General Flight Rules, which states aircrew shall not consume alcoholic beverages within 12 hours of take-off. Then they chose to fly an aggressive maneuver near the ground with inadequate airspeed that clearly exceeded the capabilities of the training airplane.

Air Force file photo

The 1994 B-52 crash at Fairchild AFB, *Wash., has become one of the more infamous cases of flight discipline, which ultimately killed all four aircrew members in the aircraft.*



When a T-38 four-ship broke the rules *by flying over Iowa's Kinnick Stadium far lower than authorized and put 70,000 lives in jeopardy, all the pilots were punished, and the flight lead lost his wings.*

Obviously this was not the first time an unauthorized flyby resulted in death. That's why we have rules covering aerial demonstrations. This was not the first time that poor judgment from alcohol consumption has led to death; that's why we have rules concerning alcohol and flying (or driving for that matter).

Why did the crew think violating the rules was acceptable behavior? What if one of them had spoken up and just said no? Oh well, this incident happened about eight years ago. Surely this kind of stuff doesn't still go on today, right?

Fast forward to Nov. 20, 2010. Four T-38 Talons were at an altitude just 16 feet above the stadium's press box when they wowed 70,000 football fans inside the University of Iowa's Kinnick Stadium before Iowa hosted Ohio State. The jets cleared the scoreboard by 58 feet, and their altitude of 176 feet above ground level was far lower than the 1,000-foot minimum elevation required for flights above a populated area such as a stadium.

In other words, they endangered tens of thousands of lives.

The jets also approached speeds of 400 knots, above the limit of 300, during both the flyover and practice runs the day before.

Wing leadership called for the investigation days after the game as video of the flyover started circulating on the internet. Spectators said they were amazed by the jets' speed and precision and how close they came to the top of the stadium. Fans erupted in cheers and later gave the pilots an ovation when they were introduced during the game. However, the investigation used Federal Aviation Administration radar data to confirm the flight violated speed and altitude rules.

> "Spectators said they were amazed by the jets' speed and how close they came to the top of the stadium ... However, FAA radar confirmed the flight violated speed and altitude rules."

The flight lead was punished under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and negotiated a legal agreement. He agreed to give up his wings, forfeit two months of pay, received an official reprimand and signed a waiver allowing the Air Force to discuss what happened. In exchange, he avoided court-martial and was allowed to leave the service.

Five other pilots (three who flew in the formation and two who acted as ground controllers) received administrative discipline for their roles in the flyover.

Again, why did the aircrew think violating the rules was acceptable behavior? What if one of them had spoken up and just said no? I'll bet the formation lead now wishes one of his wingmen had said something.

But this was just one recent isolated event, right?

Hardly.

In fiscal 2011, in addition to the flyby incident above, the following transgressions occurred in Air Education and Training Command:

- A pilot circumvented the normal Form 1042/flight physical process and flew while DNIF (duty not to include flying). This breach of discipline resulted in an Article 15 for dereliction of duty and false official statement, and he was removed from the lieutenant colonel promotion list.
- An instructor pilot led a flyby with students in the back seat, resulting in Letters of Admonishment, to include one for a squadron commander for not properly reporting the incident.
- An instructor pilot texted while flying and performed an unauthorized flyby of his family's hunting lodge with a student onboard. This resulted in a flight evaluation board where his aviation status was permanently revoked.
- Even as this article was being written, four AETC pilots were facing disciplinary action for flying barrels roles in an MC-12 in the Central Command area of responsibility. They are not just in trouble for flying a maneuver that the plane was obviously not designed for, but also for knowing the maneuver was to be flown and failing to try to stop the pilot, and then not reporting the incident after it happened. This is another scenario where you have to wonder what would have happened if someone had just said no. Everyone would have been better off.

Given the previously cited consequences of breaches of flight discipline, these aircrew members got off easy. ... They are still alive.

"An instructor pilot texted while flying and performed an unauthorized flyby of his family's hunting lodge with a student onboard. This resulted in a flight evaluation board where his aviation status was permanently revoked."

So next time you see something does not look right, do your instructor pilot, aircraft commander, lead or wingman a favor and tell them to "knock it off" before someone breaks something, ruins their career or gets killed. What is the worst that could happen? The maneuver is terminated, and you explain you called "knock it off" for a concern about safety or discipline. And maybe you risk somebody getting irritated with you.

But that's way better than the alternative: risking your career … and maybe your life.

Colonel Doyle is the chief of flight safety for Air Education and Training Command at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

For pilots who do knowingly break the rules, *the consequences are far greater than having to write "I will not break the rules" on a chalkboard. For many, it means never getting to fly in the Air Force again.*

HOW TO BECOME A DEAD PILOT

- July 27, 2004, a T-6 crew in Georgia flies several unauthorized and illegal low-altitude aerial maneuvers, including aileron rolls and high speed passes, steep bank and high pitch. Three of these demonstrations occurred at altitudes as low as 50 feet, with two near family homes.
- That night, the pilots meet friends at a local bar and consume 33 alcoholic drinks (between five people). The crew paid the bar tab around 11 p.m. and departed for crew rest.
- They awoke at 7 a.m. the following morning and decided on an early departure. They did not file a flight plan or get a weather brief.
- They performed a quick preflight around 8:50 a.m., taxied a short distance for takeoff and requested one pattern before departing to the west. At this time they were already in violation of flight safety rules, which state aircrew shall not consume alcoholic beverages within 12 hours of take-off.
- After takeoff, the crew then chose to fly an aggressive maneuver near the ground with inadequate airspeed that clearly exceeded the capabilities of the aircraft. This resulted in total loss of control of the aircraft.
- The front seat pilot tried to eject, but was fatally injured in the unsuccessful attempt.
- The other pilot rode the aircraft into the ground where he also was killed and the aircraft destroyed.

AVALANCHE, DOWNED AIRCRAFT

CRISES PUT AIRMEN TO THE TEST IN AFGHANISTAN

By Tech. Sgt. **JEREMY LARLEE**
Photos by Master Sgt. **SHANE A. CUOMO**

A team of U.S. Air Force and Afghan air force aircrew and support personnel snapped into action Jan. 24 to provide life-saving support to 31 Afghan victims of an avalanche.

Additionally, the team supported an Afghan aircrew that had downed their aircraft in an effort to rescue the victims of the avalanche in Northern Afghanistan near the city of Fayzabad.

Lt. Col. Chas Tacheny, the 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group deputy commander, was in charge of putting a team together for the mission. He said his first priority was to ensure the mission didn't add additional victims to the situation.

"First thing you think about in Afghanistan is the ability to survive," Tacheny said. "You don't want to do any more damage to your crew or equipment."

The Portland, Ore., native said he made sure to include medical and force protection personnel in the team of people spread out among two Mi-17 helicopters. He also wanted to ensure that everyone was properly equipped with cold weather gear because temperatures at the site were minus 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

The rescue team showed off some flexibility in performing the mission. They were originally assembled to perform an air safety inspection of the crash site; but about an hour before their arrival, they learned of the avalanche victims, which added a humanitarian wrinkle to the mission. Airlift of all victims would require two flights. The aircrew of the downed aircraft communicated with the new rescue team to provide triage information about which victims needed to be on the first flight. They also combined forces with the local villagers to shovel out a landing zone for the rescue team.

"This aircraft recovery mission changed very quickly from a safety mission to a humanitarian effort," said Lt. Col. John Conmy, the 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron commander and a Mi-17 pilot who participated in the mission. "The landing zone was much smaller than we anticipated. Not too many teams could've pulled this off."

Tacheny said the biggest challenge was getting to the site safely. The site was at an elevation of 9,000 feet and tucked into the difficult-to-traverse Hindu Kush mountain range. The Afghan

Mi-17 helicopter engineer *Staff Sgt. Jonathan Hill, from the 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron, directs villagers to his helicopter Jan. 24. American and Afghan airmen conducted a rescue mission in the Badakshan province, Afghanistan, after an avalanche trapped and injured members of Shewa Village.*

air force members were an integral part of the navigation as they helped direct pilots to the rescue site.

"The Afghans know this country and the terrain well," Tacheny said. "They did a great job of leading us through the mountains to where we needed to go."

The Afghans also sent safety officers and maintenance personnel on the mission. They were eager for a chance to pitch in to help their countrymen.

"It makes us happy to help others who are facing danger," said Afghan air force Maj. Farid Samin. "The crews of all the aircraft worked together as a team to make this happen."

Even with expert direction, traveling safely to the site was no easy task, said Capt. Mark Morales, an instructor pilot with the 438th AEAS. Morales piloted one of the two helicopters.

He said that the combination of the high altitude and a small landing zone required the best efforts of everyone involved in the mission. The landing was complicated by the snow, which was up to 5 feet deep in some areas, obscuring the landing zone.

"The mission presented very challenging flight conditions, and to see our crew execute it effectively makes me extremely proud of them," Morales said. "It was not just the aircrew, though; a lot of people came together to help us get up the mountain and help save (the victims) from additional suffering."

Master Sgt. Chris Banks, a ground medic with the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing, played a vital part in the mission as well. As the sole medic, he was in charge of ensuring all 31 victims of the avalanche and the aircrew of the downed Mi-17 received urgent care.

"That was probably the most intense mission I have ever worked on," Banks said. "When you are working with that many patients, it really gets your adrenaline running."

During the approximately 15-minute trip back to Fayzabad, the sergeant, a native of Orlando, Fla., hustled from patient to patient swapping out wet dressings for new dry ones and treating wounds as best he could. He said if the rescue mission had come any later, they probably would not have been able to save all of the victims.

"It was the worst case of frostbite I have ever seen in a person," Banks said. "I had only seen cases that severe in pictures."

"It was the worst case of frostbite I have ever seen in a person. I had only seen cases that severe in pictures."

Morales, a native of San Antonio, said it was a true team effort. In addition to the Afghans providing guidance through the mountains, a German provincial reconstruction team provided timely reconnaissance pictures that delivered valuable information for the mission.

"Teamwork and communication between the U.S., the Germans and the Afghans was the lynchpin for this whole operation," Morales said. "Without the German intelligence, we would have been burning precious time and fuel searching for the crash site and village."

Tacheny said he regrets not being able to do a safety ground inspection of the downed aircraft, but he said the most important part of the mission — saving lives — was a success.

"The humanitarian piece of the mission was an absolute homerun," he said. "I'm extremely proud of the team. They did an admirable job."

Sergeant Larlee is assigned to the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs at Kabul, Afghanistan. (AFNS)

Tending to injured Shewa villagers *in a Mi-17 helicopter Jan. 24, Master Sgt. Chris Banks, a medic with the 438th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group, said he worked on some of the worst cases of frostbite he'd ever seen. Because of the severity of the injuries, Banks relayed the need for immediate ambulatory services at the landing zone to the aircrew.*

CLEAR THE RUNWAY

F-16 'REAR-ENDS' ANOTHER FIGHTER

CHANNELIZED ATTENTION CONTRIBUTES TO MISHAP

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii (PACAFNS) — Headquarters Pacific Air Forces released the results of its investigation into the July 29 ground collision of two F-16CM aircraft at Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea.

The accident investigation board found clear and convincing evidence the cause of the mishap was the pilot's failure to properly monitor his aircraft's position relative to the aircraft in front of him, because of a breakdown in visual scan, task mis-prioritization and channelized attention. The investigation also found that overconfidence contributed to the mishap.

The incident occurred as a flight of four F-16s was taxiing to the runway of Kunsan AB for takeoff on an operational readiness exercise sortie. The pilot of the first aircraft stopped on the taxiway as part of a standard check of the radar warning receiver. The second and third aircraft in the formation stopped behind the first. However, the pilot of the fourth aircraft was accomplishing additional aircraft systems checks while taxiing and failed to notice that the third aircraft was stopped in front of him until it was too late to avoid colliding.

The fourth aircraft received damage totaling slightly more than $2 million, and the third aircraft in the formation received just under $590,000 in damage.

Neither pilot was injured, nor was there damage to property or other aircraft.

by Staff Sgt. Miguel Lara

When an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot "rear-ended" another F-16 *on the flight line at Kunsan AB, Republic of Korea, July 29, the collision cost slightly more than $2 million in damages to one aircraft and $590,000 to the other. No one was injured.*

LAUGHLIN NAMED BUSIEST AIRFIELD IN AIR FORCE

LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS) — Laughlin was officially announced as the busiest airfield and combined air traffic control tower in the Air Force for 2011. The Air Force Flight Standards Agency deemed them so for having a total of 337,439 operations last year.

Controlling the busiest airfield in the Air Force is the 47th Operations Support Squadron radar approach control section and tower. The RAPCON was identified as the busiest of 39 facilities with 266,591 operations, and the tower was ninth out of 98 towers with 70,848.

"I'm very excited for and at the same time proud of the men and women in Laughlin's RAPCON and tower who daily dedicate themselves to ensuring the safe execution of Laughlin's flight training mission," said Chief Master Sgt. Howard Teesdale, 47th Operations Support Squadron RAPCON chief controller.

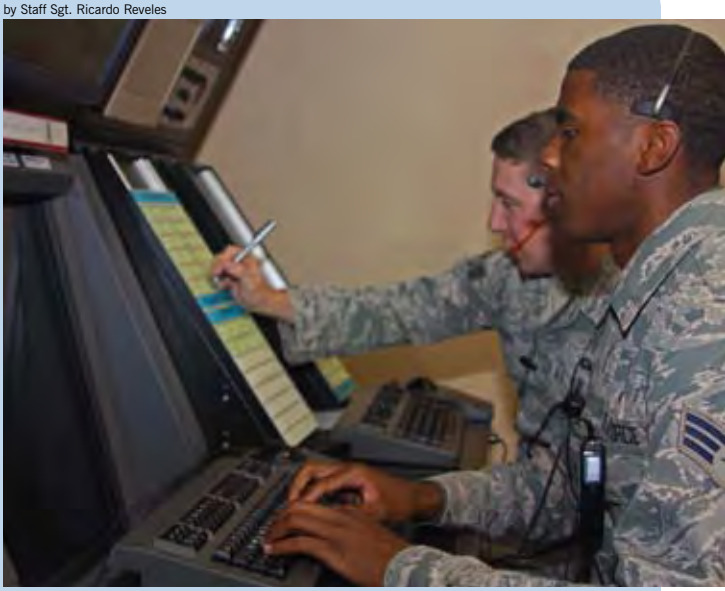
The tower and RAPCON are made up of 69 controllers who control 62 airfields, 10,000 square miles of airspace within 100 miles of Laughlin.

Teesdale noted that Laughlin has been his busiest and most complex assignment to date.

"When your main customer is student pilots, the operating environment we try to provide them is ever changing," the chief said.

— Senior Airman Scott Saldukas
47th Flying Training Wing
Public Affairs

by Staff Sgt. Ricardo Reveles



Senior Airman Tariq Simmons *(foreground), 47th Operations Support Squadron air traffic controller, manages and directs aircraft from a terminal at Laughlin AFB, Texas.*

BURNING RUBBER
HELPS LAND U-2 SAFELY

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea (PACAFNS) — Going 100 mph down the flight line might be normal for an F-16 Fighting Falcon; but for the drivers of the U-2 chase car, it's also a daily event on the ground.

As an instrument of safety, pilots use the U-2 chase car to monitor takeoffs and landings of the aircraft in an attempt to warn the pilot of any possible complications or dangers.

"The car is really important as a margin of safety," said Maj. Alex Scott, a 5th Reconnaissance Squadron U-2 pilot. "Actually, in the past they tried using other aircraft as chasers, but they couldn't fly slowly enough. As a result they started using high-performance 'muscle cars.' "

Because of its large wingspan, the U-2 is notorious for being one of the most difficult aircraft to land, he said.

During a routine flight, U-2 Dragon Lady pilots fly eight-hour missions on average.

"While it may seem frivolous to be tearing up and down the runway in a sports car, the (vehicle) is the U-2 pilot's primary source of mutual support and ensures the safe operation of a national asset," said Maj. Carl Maymi, a 5th RS U-2 pilot.

As the aircraft lifts off or lands, pilots in the chase car radio the pilot about wing angles and ground distance. "We can land the aircraft without it; but if you can take every precaution possible, you're going to do it," Scott said.

Along with flight training, U-2 pilots also are required to take a secondary course that teaches them how to properly maintain high-performance cars at top speeds.

"Flooring it and pushing the car to its max speed (so) you can catch up to the U-2 is something not many people can say they've done," Scott said.

The chase car can reach speeds of more than 100 mph, but the speed range varies depending on the needs of the outgoing or incoming aircraft.

"The best thing about being a U-2 pilot and chase car driver here is the relevant information that we get to gather on a day-to-day basis for (U.S. Forces Korea) and for joint coalition partners," Scott said.

If the thrill of flying at heights of 70,000 feet isn't enough for these pilots, then perhaps they also may have a career as a race car driver someday.

— Airman 1st Class Michael Battles
51st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

***With a U-2 Dragon Lady about to land**, Maj. Carl Maymi, a U-2 pilot with the 5th Reconnaissance Squadron at Osan AB, South Korea, gets ready to drive a chase car at speeds that can reach more than 100 mph to help ensure the aircraft lands safely.*

by Airman 1st Class Michael Battles