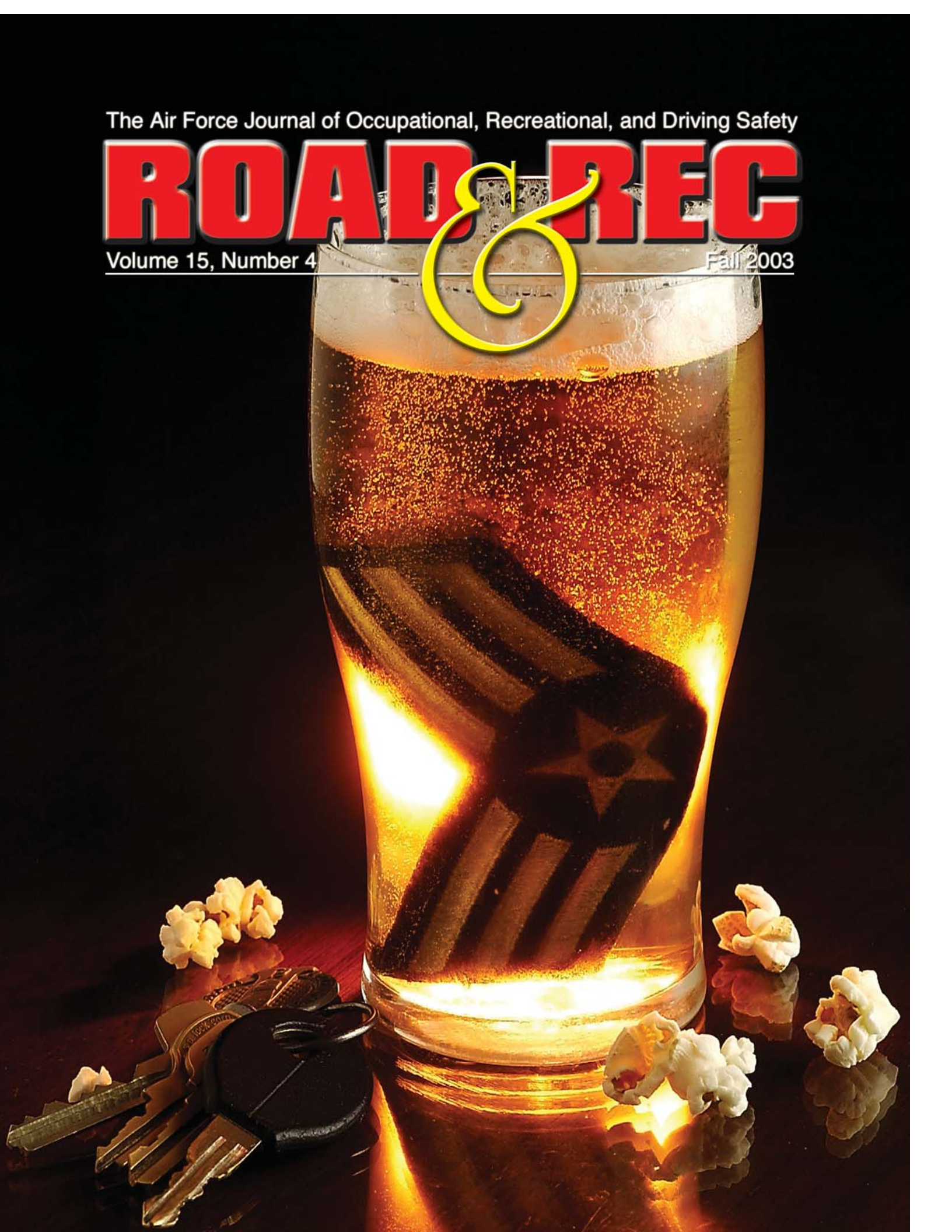


The Air Force Journal of Occupational, Recreational, and Driving Safety

ROAD & REC

Volume 15, Number 4

Fall 2003



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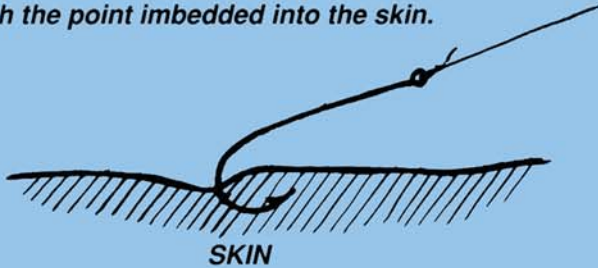
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Editor's Note: In our last issue, we printed a story called "Clean-Jerk that Fishing Hook!" However, we omitted the illustration, without which the procedure in the article was confusing to some readers. The staff of *Road and Rec* regrets this omission. Here is the illustration:

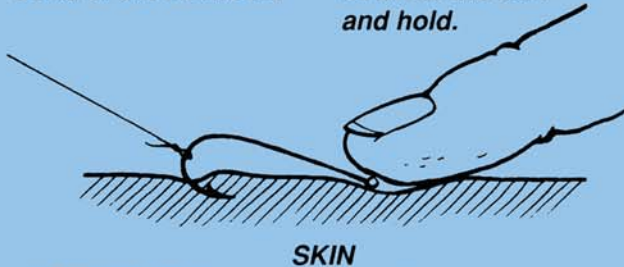
1.

Shown here is a typical example of a fishhook mishap with the point imbedded into the skin.



2.

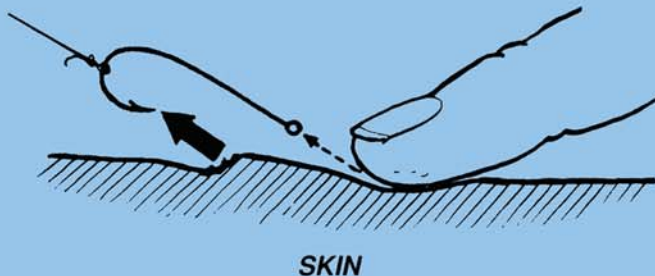
Cut the fishing line from the hook and tie it to the bend of the fishhook. With a finger, press the shank eyelet firmly down to the skin and hold.



WARNING: Failure to hold hook's shank down can cause the point of the hook to go through additional tissue during any removal attempt.

3.

Holding the string firmly, give a quick yank in the direction parallel with the shaft and extract the hook.



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Self-Inflicted Pain

The Long-Term Cost of a DWI

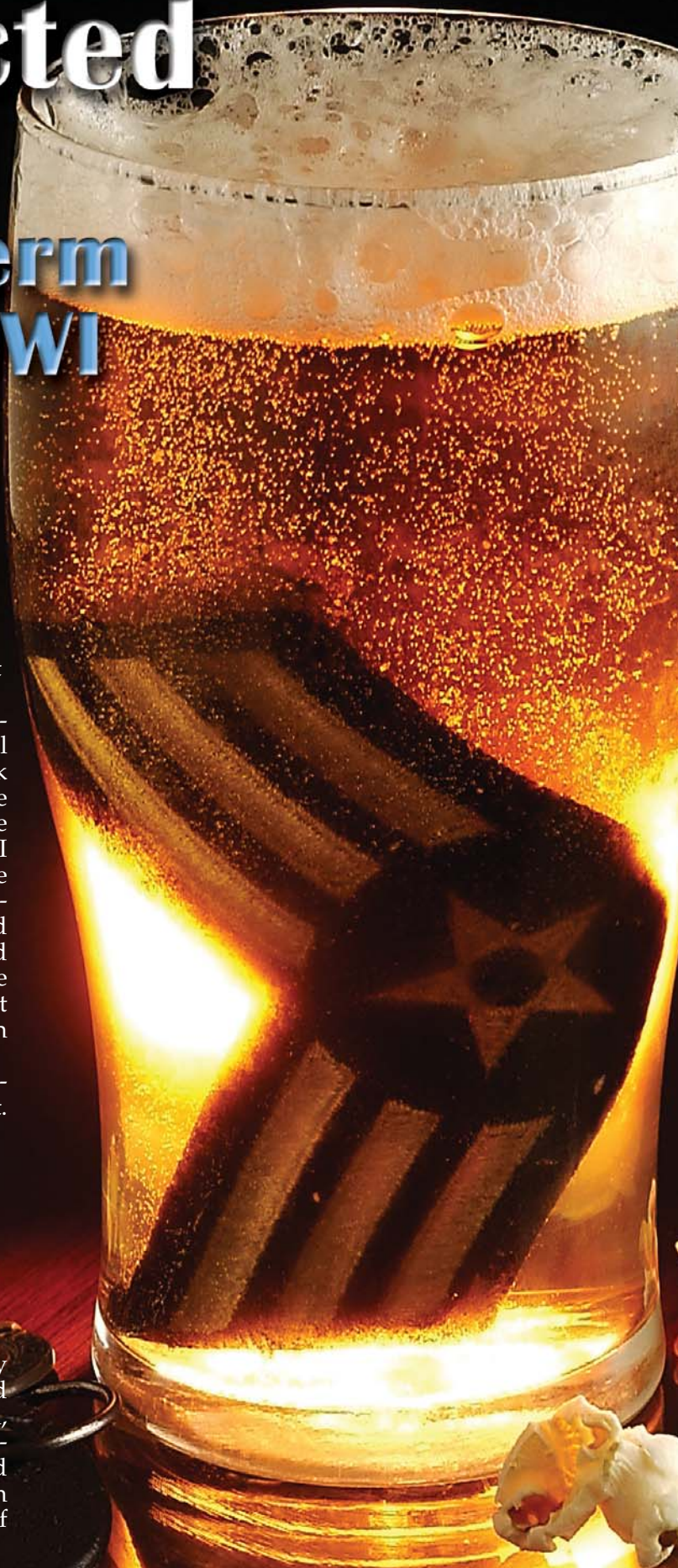
MSGT JOHN J. SPILLANE IV
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Early in life, most of us learn how to avoid self-inflicted pain. We don't put our hands on hot burners. We don't run with scissors. We don't jump on trampolines with drumsticks in our mouths. Basically, we figure out, through common sense and watching others, that some things just aren't good for us, and we avoid them.

But if we are so smart, and learn so well from others, why are so many of us military members still getting DWIs (driving while intoxicated)? I think there are two basic reasons: 1) As individuals, we don't believe we will ever get caught, and 2) We don't consider the punishment associated with DWI to be severe. To illustrate my point, let me put it like this: If technology allowed us to detect and immediately arrest any driver who was over the legal blood alcohol content (BAC), none of us would drink and drive. Second, if persons arrested for DWI were immediately shot in the knee caps, the punishment would be severe enough that none of us would even risk taking too much cough syrup before driving.

Let's get things straight right now: 1) DWI is self-inflicted. 2) If you drink and drive, you will be caught. 3) If you drink and drive, the punishment is severe.

Seven years ago, I thought I was invincible. I couldn't be caught drinking and driving. If I had two beers or a dozen, I was always "OK to drive." I was a walking cliché: "I only had a couple." "I don't have far to go." "I'll close one eye, and I'll be fine." Here's the tragedy in all of this. I had known several people who had received Article 15s for DWI. Without exception, none thought it could happen to them, and without exception all were pulled over, arrested, found guilty and punished. If I had learned the lesson from them, I could have avoided the self-inflicted pain of my own DWI.





Murphy's Law eventually catches up with everybody, and when it comes to DWI, the odds are increasingly working against you. Police officers nationwide are better trained today and are actively searching for easy DWI "kills." As a nation, our societal tolerance for DWI has led to a lowering of the legal BAC from .10 to .08, to get matching highway funds from our federal government. What does this mean to you? "No Tolerance"!

Can you drink and drive and get away with it? Sure you can. You may have done it in the past, and you may do it in the future. The problem is, every time you drink, drive and *don't* get caught, you reinforce a false notion, "It will never happen to me." It *will* happen to you. I guarantee it. It might not be today, it might not be tomorrow, but it will be *some* day.

If just twice a month you stop, have a few drinks with friends and then drive 20 minutes home, in a single year you have spent eight full hours behind the wheel driving drunk. Would you risk driving drunk for eight hours straight? I hope not. Year after year, your time drunk behind the wheel grows by eight more hours until WHAM! Self-Inflicted DWI. In a 20-year career, your total time behind the wheel drunk, only drinking twice a month, will be over 160 hours.

Next time you drink, don't think the odds are with you. Think that your number is up, and today is the day that the cops will catch you. Remember, if they don't catch you today, they will catch you tomorrow.

If knowing that you are going to get caught doesn't deter you from drinking and driving, think about getting shot in the kneecaps. Really! If you are lucky enough to not end up in jail for killing someone or breaking something, getting a DWI has the same effect as shooting your career in the kneecaps. Think about it. Rarely can an officer's career survive a DWI. Senior NCOs are not much better off. I mean that they can expect to retire at the rank they held when they received the DWI (if not one lower). Officers and Senior NCOs know the reality of their situations—DWI punishments are severe for persons in leadership positions. Heck, DWI punishments are severe for everyone. If you don't think so, you haven't been paying attention.

Take me, for example. I self-inflicted a DWI eight years ago. I found out very quickly that there were things I knew about DWI and things I didn't. You probably know what I knew (the shot gun blast to the first knee). First comes the Article 15, the name in the paper, the medical evaluation, the famous "half your pay for two months," a bust to the next lower grade and a few days of extra duty.

What you probably don't know is the Air Force takes out the second kneecap much more slowly.

Like, with a drill.

Three weeks after I self-inflicted my DWI, I

received a rejected extended tour Commendation Package (worth three testing points) from our Wing Commander, with a handwritten note addressing his personal disappointment in me. Sigh! Three years of "Atta-Boys" gone.

A month after that, everyone in my pay grade got a test date for promotion. Everyone, that is, except me. (Pssst: You are ineligible to test with an Unfavorable Information File (UIF) or if you are on a control roster. I had both, and so will you if you get a DWI.) Are you starting to get the picture?

The following month, my EPR was due, and I was starting to feel as if someone was trying to tell me something. Let's just say the numbers were less than stellar. Each and every year after that, for five years, right around the time I got a promotion testing eligibility sheet, I realized that I had to go into the test knowing I had to score a lot higher than my peers just to stay even. Then I had to score even higher than that to make up for the three points in medals I lost.

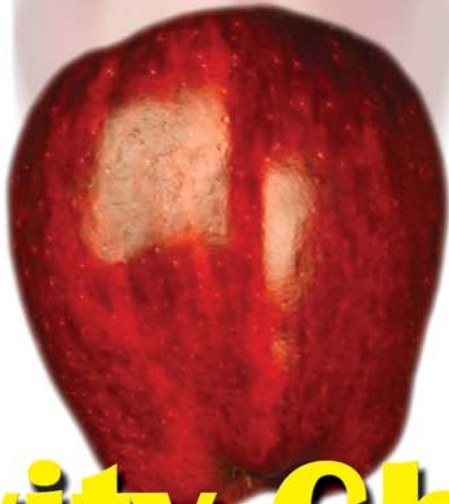
Did I mention that you can't PCS (change stations) if you have a UIF? Lord knows I tried. I even offered to go on a Special Duty, Extended Long Tour Overseas, with half pay and no choice assignment. No luck. My assignment guy said something about a regulation or something like that.

To make an agonizingly long story short, eight months after self-infliction I finished dealing with mental health and the hospital (no comment). Two months later, I went to another squadron as damaged goods. My first meeting with my new commander was like a scene from a prison movie. Kind of like, "We heard you had potential, but got into a little trouble. We are here to give you a fresh start, but screw up just once and we will have to break your kneecaps again and throw you out of the service." It was a refreshing change after being watched like a hawk for eight months.

Five years after self-infliction, I finally thought my DWI was behind me, until my boss submitted a STEP package on my behalf. After reviewing my package and checking out my EPRs, our commander rejected the package out-of-hand because of "an alcohol-related incident involving a vehicle." So much for catching up by working hard.

It has now been eight years since I self-inflicted my DWI, and it still affects me every day. Each morning when I wake up, I realize that most of us don't work in a one-mistake Air Force, but I do. I do because of one night and one very stupid decision. I didn't think I would get caught—heck, otherwise I wouldn't have driven. I didn't think I would shoot my career in the kneecaps, otherwise I wouldn't have driven.

Learn from someone else's mistakes: Don't put your hand on a hot burner. Don't run with scissors. Don't jump on a trampoline with a drumstick in your mouth. And for goodness sakes, don't self-inflict a DWI. ■



Gravity Check

A Few Stories About Taking A Fall

The story goes that Sir Isaac Newton formulated a theory on acceleration and gravity after watching an apple fall from a tree. In doing so, he defined one of the basic forces of nature. Gravity always wins, and it deserves our respect.

Professional stunt people know that, so they plan for taking a fall by measuring and testing beforehand, and they leave nothing to chance. The rest of us fall by accident, and we get hurt. But even though we don't plan it, we sometimes set ourselves up for a fall by doing something unwise—or just plain stupid.

Falls are the second most common cause of accidental death in America (after motor vehicle accidents) and the leading cause of accidental death in the home. Many of these deaths are the elderly, but nobody is immune from falling.

Younger people are more resilient than older folks, so minor falls may not result in injuries. The injuries come in more spectacular encounters with gravitation.

Every year, scores of Air Force people are injured in falls because of tripping, slipping or just losing their balance at the wrong moment. These injuries cost the individuals a lot of pain, and they cost the Air Force untold thousands of dollars in lost productivity.

The following short stories of Air Force people falling illustrate the needlessness of these mishaps. They can make interesting—and instructive—reading. (Note: Blood alcohol levels in some of these stories are based on the legal definition of drunkenness for driving. At the level where people are too drunk to drive, they will also be pretty unsteady on their feet.)

Romeo?

Balconies are lousy places for sightseeing, especially if you've been drinking. During a farewell party, an Air Force member drank two bottles of champagne. Later, the party moved to the balcony adjoining the dormitory room. The member leaned over the balcony to look at a couple of women who were walking by. He lost his balance and fell four stories onto the grass, breaking his shoulder. Not the classiest way to make an impression.

Juliet?

Balconies are also bad places to be distracted. A member walking on her second floor balcony heard a disturbance across the street. She walked to the edge of the balcony and fell through an open fire escape hatch, landing one floor below. She suffered severe head injuries.

Spider-Man?

Wall-crawling is not for us mere mortals. Arriving home after work at his off-base apartment, a member found the security gate locked and nobody to open it. He tried to climb over the four-foot wall, lost his balance and fell, fracturing a couple of vertebrae in his neck.

The Cat Burglar?

And then there are the amateur ledge-walkers, who may have seen "To Catch a Thief" too many times. A locked entrance faced a member who returned to his dormitory room without his key after midnight. Unable to find someone with a master key, he tried to enter his second floor room by walking along a three-foot wide ledge to the window. Taking a step back as he tried to open the window, he fell off the ledge. He fell 15 feet, breaking several ribs and puncturing a lung. (That never happened to Cary Grant!)

Another story with the same factors: A locked room in a dormitory. A member walking on a ledge. This member was barefoot, and the ledge was only six inches wide. He slipped and fell eight feet to the ground, suffering a compression fracture of the back.

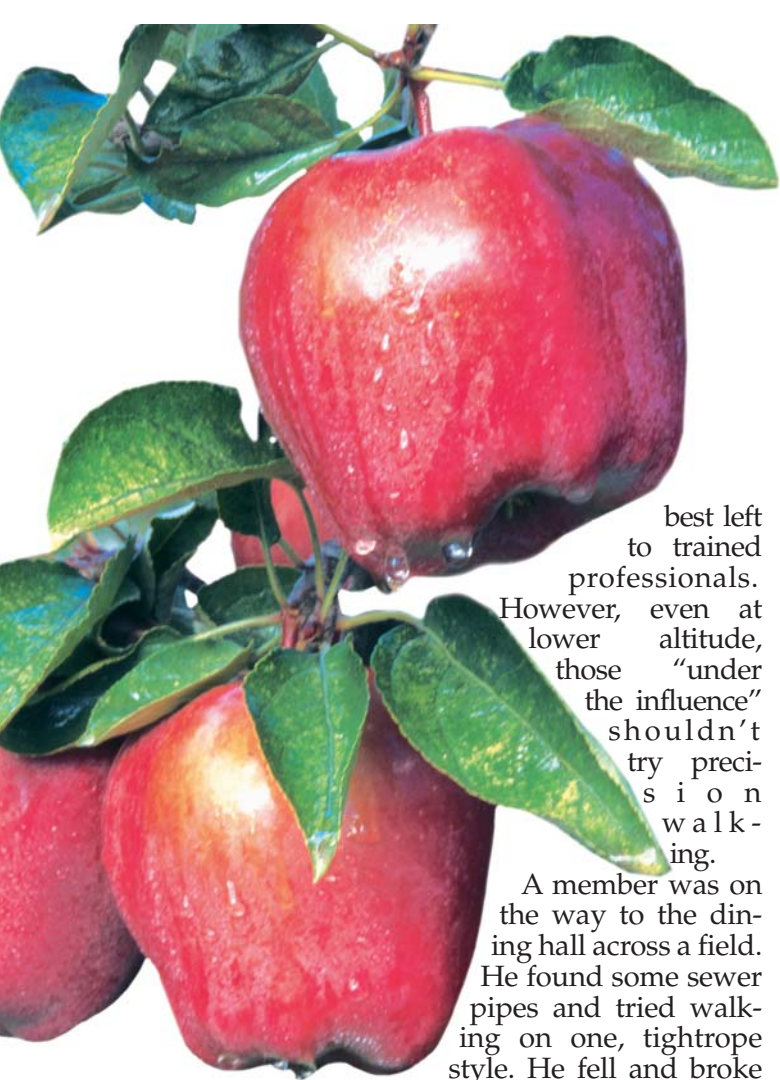
A member was attempting to leave a hospital without being seen. Inspired by a blood alcohol level about three times the legal limit, he tried walking on an eight-inch wide ledge. He fell three stories and fractured his spine.

Don't Try This (Even) At Home

Another member on another third floor, this one in a dormitory, was drinking beer with some friends. He went into the bathroom and, as a joke, a friend locked him in. Discovering the locked door, the internee went out a window and tried walking on the ledge to another window to get back in the room. He fell and fractured his spine. (Is this beginning to sound familiar?) Again, alcohol was a factor.

Ledge-walking is just like stunt flying...

continued on next page



best left to trained professionals. However, even at lower altitude, those “under the influence” shouldn’t try precision walking. A member was on the way to the dining hall across a field. He found some sewer pipes and tried walking on one, tightrope style. He fell and broke his jaw. He, too, had been drinking.

Bomba the Jungle Boy?

Speaking of stunts, there is the member at the beach who spotted a bent-over palm tree and decided to run up the trunk. After a running start of 30 to 40 yards, he began running up the tree, getting about 12 feet up before jumping off. He landed on his feet in the sand and felt some pain in his back, but didn’t see a doctor until the next day. He had fractured part of his lower back on impact.

Acrobats?

Certain things have specific purposes, and should not be used for other purposes. For instance, a bed is not a ladder: While cleaning his room, a member moved his bed out from the wall. In trying to reach a painting, he stood on the bed. It moved and he fell to the floor, breaking his arm.

Likewise, a dumpster is not a ladder: A member was standing on top of a dumpster trying to reach a piece of plywood. He lost his balance, fell off and broke his left foot.

A banister is not a slide: A member was leaving a building on his way to work. While walking down a flight of stairs, he

decided to slide down a handrail. As he jumped, he went over the handrail and sprained his ankle upon landing.

A vehicle roof is not a platform: A member at a rock concert was sitting on top of the cab of a refrigerator truck which was wet from spilled drinks. As she tried to climb down, she slipped and fell eight feet to the ground. She broke a rib and one wrist.

A chair is not an pommel horse: Watching TV in the dayroom in his barracks, a member decided to change the channel. Instead of walking around a chair in front of him, he walked *over* it. In doing so, he slipped and hit the floor, breaking his collarbone.

A balcony rail is not a chair: A member had been drinking beer with friends since the afternoon at a dormitory. By midnight, his blood alcohol level was nearly three times the legal limit. While trying to sit on the second floor balcony, he lost his balance and fell about 14 feet. He broke his neck and was paralyzed from the neck down.

Are we back to the balconies again? There are many more examples of people falling from balconies, and often under the influence of alcohol.

Continuing in the same vein, a balcony railing is not a ladder: Another member drinking on a balcony was talking to some friends who were standing in the parking lot. He decided to go down to join them, and he climbed over the railing rather than using the stairs. His hands slipped and he fell, spraining his back. His blood alcohol level was almost twice the legal definition of intoxication.

A balcony is not a commode: One intoxicated member leaned over a second floor balcony to vomit. As she did so, she lost her balance and fell, receiving severe bruises.

Isaac and His Apples

See what we mean? All of these falling accidents were preventable. They all involved some failure of good judgment or simply carelessness. They need not have happened. Although most of them caused no major injuries or permanent disabilities, they were all painful and cumulatively costly.

However, the difference between a lost time injury and a disability—or even death—can be in the way you hit after you fall.

The best advice is sobriety, care and a respect for that force Sir Isaac Newton discovered under the apple tree. Remember: Gravity always wins. ■

Every Airman A Leader

Commanders,

Since the 1st of June three motorcycle mishaps have left three ACC airmen dead and one other seriously injured. Initial indications are that in all three mishaps our young airmen were clearly exceeding the speed limit. In one mishap, they were under the influence of alcohol, not wearing helmets, and had not attended the mandatory motorcycle training. This failure to adhere to our AFI's, policies, and society's laws is getting our most valuable resources maimed or killed.

We demand disciplined application of airpower in the air. We need to demand that same level of discipline on the ground—on and off duty. This means being aggressive in communicating the standards in our roll calls and commanders calls, doing what it takes to go beyond that to ingrain the standards of conduct of behavior in our young folks from the moment they set foot on our installations. From our commanders and supervisors, to our newest accessions, we need to emphasize the importance of watching out for each other, on and off duty. Standards are standards; and if someone fails to comply, we need on-the-spot corrections. Be tough and don't let things slide. That means enforcing things like speeding on base, being late for work, missing an appointment, and other deficiencies that underpin our culture of discipline and proper behavior 24/7. A dose of "tough love" in appropriate cases may get the attention of reckless individuals and ultimately save lives.

We need every single member in ACC to accomplish our mission, and we have a moral imperative to stop this needless loss of life and preserve our combat capability. We must create a culture of life and to detail and eliminate the wrong notion that there is a distinction between on duty and off duty when it comes to safety matters. Our newest accessions need to have the culture of discipline 24/7. We are all airmen 24/7, and standards don't end at the base gates. Every airman is a leader on and off duty. We need all ranks, civilians, and family members to understand this serious issue. Every one of us has a personal responsibility to keep our Air Force family safe, alive, and well. Thanks for your cooperation and thanks for your leadership...let's all "push it up" and see if we can save more lives.

Lt. Gen. Bruce A. Wright
Vice Commander,
Air Combat Command



(Editor's Note: These words, from the vice commander of Air Combat Command, are pertinent for all Air Force members.)



Reprinted Courtesy of **TORCH**

He had two beautiful little girls, he loved sports, and he was one of the most popular people in the squadron. But drinking and driving is a lethal combination that doesn't play favorites.

Twelve years ago in March 1991,

I was a first sergeant assigned to a medical group overseas. My family and I were cooking out and enjoying our time together.

As we sat down to eat, my beeper went off. I looked at the number and immediately recognized it as the law enforcement desk. The security policeman said, "Sergeant Wilford, we just got notified there has been a

wreck off base involving one of your squadron members. The witnesses said there are injuries." I told my wife I had to go; one of my troops had been in an accident.

The location of the accident was about 20 minutes off base, so I had time to think on the way to the scene. I recall praying that my troop wasn't too badly hurt. I knew the location of the accident that the security policeman had given was notorious for dangerous curves and steep hills. I also found myself trying to recall everything I knew about the non-commissioned officer involved in this wreck.

John was a staff sergeant, recently divorced, with two little girls. He loved sports, and we played together on our squadron softball team. In fact, every Monday he would stop by to discuss our previous week's games.

As I got close to the scene, I could see emergency lights flashing and policemen trying to keep the vehicles moving. A small crowd had gathered beside the road on a curve. I parked and ran to the crowd yelling, "Where is he?" No one said anything; they just pointed down the hill.

As I turned to head down the incline, I recognized two of our airmen from the medical group standing by one of our ambulances at the scene. One of them said, "It's John, and it's bad!" Those words echoed in my mind as I went down the hill.

About 200 feet down, I found John's car wedged up against a tree. I looked inside, John wasn't there. He had been thrown from the vehicle. I looked further down the hill, and I could see flashlights and hear voices. "God, let one of those voices be John's," I whispered.

I stumbled on down to where the flashlights were, and I could see two figures against the rocks. I could make out one person kneeling beside someone lying in a fetal position on the rocks. I recognized the voice.

"Doc, is that you?" I asked. He responded, "First Sergeant, John's dead." I don't know why, but I leaned over John and started yelling at him, "John, why did you do this?" Then I sat on a rock beside John and cried as I waited on our medics to get the equipment into the ravine to get his body out. It took a couple of hours to get John out of that ravine. We had to carefully guide the emergency basket to keep it straight as it went up the hill. Around that basket were the section commander, the doctor, two medics, an OSI agent from the base and me. All of us knew John, and it would take a long time to come to grips with that night.

Later, as I pulled back into my driveway, I tried to collect myself before I walked into the house. I opened the door, and my wife ran to me

with a shocked look on her face. I didn't realize my shirt was covered in John's blood from getting him out of the ravine.

An investigation revealed that John had been at a beach party all afternoon drinking and then decided to drive. Some friends offered him a ride, but he assured them he was fine. The autopsy revealed that John's blood alcohol was .21, over twice the legal limit.

That night and the weeks that followed were some of the saddest times of my military career. Our squadron was torn apart because everyone loved John. I found myself trying to be strong for the squadron, while hurting so badly inside. Without a doubt, the hardest thing I

have ever had to do was write the condolence letters to his little girls telling them about their father.

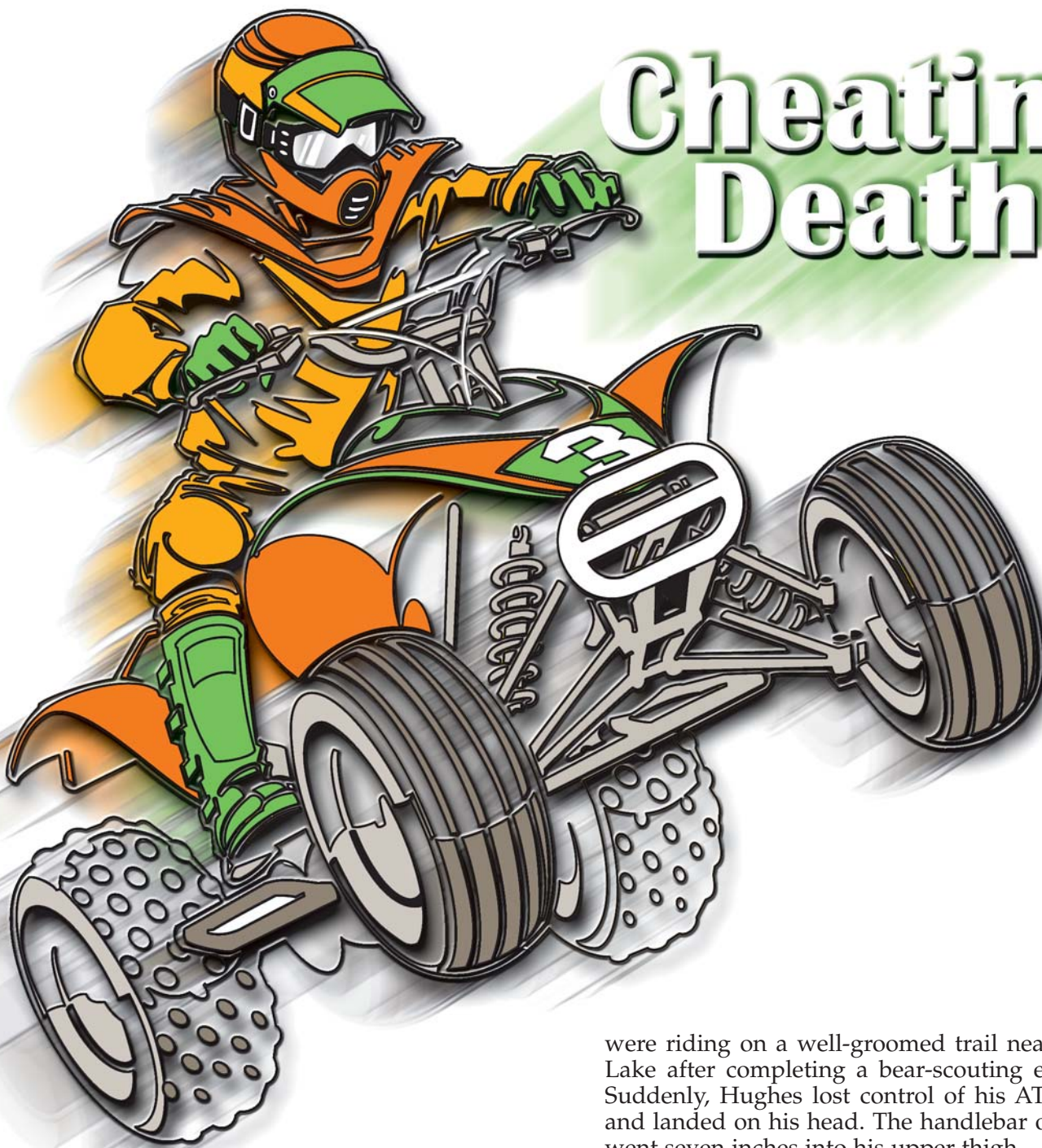
Everyone attended his memorial service on our base, and the healing process began slowly. It's taken me a long time to put this tragedy on paper, but I know Staff Sergeant John Keller would want me to.

Our message needs to be loud and clear: **DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!** Call Airmen Against Drunk Driving, call a friend, call a supervisor, or call a taxi. Life is too precious, and it's not just you that gets hurt, it's also your family and friends who care about you.

Finally, if you see people drinking and they insist they can still drive, don't listen to them. Take care of your teammates by taking their keys—you may be saving their lives. ■



Cheating Death



SSGT JENNIFER GREGOIRE
354 FW/PA
Eielson AFB AK

Quick thinking, self-aid and buddy care skills, and the proper safety gear saved an "Iceman" from bleeding to death in a freak all-terrain vehicle accident (ATV) this summer.

On June 1, 2003, SrA Bryan Hughes, 354th Communications Squadron, and three companions

were riding on a well-groomed trail near Harding Lake after completing a bear-scouting expedition. Suddenly, Hughes lost control of his ATV, flipped and landed on his head. The handlebar of the ATV went seven inches into his upper thigh.

"I knew as soon I lost control that it was going to hurt when I landed. It all happened so fast, I'm not sure how I veered off-trail but I remember dirt shot up in the air as I hit an embankment," said Hughes. "I was shocked, but I wanted to make sure everything worked. I moved my head, arms, legs and torso then I felt my right leg and it was warm—when I looked down I was soaked in blood and blood was shooting out of my leg."

Knowing that stopping the blood was paramount, Hughes stuck his hand in his leg. "That probably wasn't the smartest thing to do since I was wearing a dirty glove," he said, "but I had to

stop the bleeding.”

Following 50 yards behind Hughes were SSgt Lee Robinson, 354 CS, and Marty Paju, an Eielson General Dynamics contractor. Robinson immediately took off his shirt and applied direct pressure on the wound.

“He kept yelling at me to stay awake, as I was going in and out of consciousness,” said Hughes.

When Paju saw the accident, he used his cellular phone to call 911 and provided response crews with their exact location by getting the coordinates off his GPS.



Rick Bell, an Eielson Science Applications International Corporation contractor, who was ahead of the group, said he realized something was wrong when they didn’t catch up. When Bell arrived on-scene he took over applying direct pressure and Paju rode out to meet the Alaska State Troopers at the trailhead—30 minutes away.

Meanwhile, Hughes’ condition seemed to worsen.

Though the Alaska State Troopers’ sport utility vehicle got stuck on the trail two miles away from the accident scene, Paju said he knew it would be okay because emergency dispatch also requested a MEDEVAC helicopter.

“When I saw the helicopter—which seemed to take forever to arrive—come over the hill, I was relieved. That’s when I knew I wasn’t going to die,” said Hughes.

Hughes was taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital where he underwent surgery to repair the cut arteries and veins and close the wound.

“I was a little worried when they asked if I wanted to call my wife before I went into surgery,” said Hughes, a December newlywed. He was able to speak to his wife, SSgt Latoya High, at Cannon AFB, NM, before entering surgery. “She took it really hard.”

Hughes spent six days in intensive care, three more days on the surgery ward and is still recovering. “The doctors told me afterwards I lost one quar-

ter of all my blood and now I’m on blood thinning medication to get rid of blood clots that are still in my leg,” said Hughes.

“The end result of this accident could’ve been dramatically worse,” said Col Jan-Marc Jouas, 354th Fighter Wing commander.

“However, this is a great example of everyone doing everything right. Everyone wore the appropriate safety gear, had taken measures to ensure they had the right equipment in case of an accident (cell phone and GPS), stayed calm and applied the proper first-aid techniques—just like self-aid and buddy care teaches us. I applaud their smarts and am grateful we didn’t lose a member of the Iceman Team,” said Jouas.

MSgt Annette Sisseck, 354 CS first sergeant, said, “If it wouldn’t have been for the entire group’s sense of urgency we could have lost Hughes.” ■

(Editor’s Note: IAW AFI 36-2238, Self-Aid and Buddy Care (SABC) is an educational program established for nonmedical personnel. It applies to all personnel of the regular Air Force, the National Guard, and the US Air Force Reserve. The training objective is to: Provide basic life and limb-saving techniques to help wounded or injured personnel survive in medical emergencies until medical help is available. All personnel are required to complete initial training and every 24 months thereafter to keep certification current.)

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Dog Bites!

Road & Rec, Autumn 1991

“Does your dog bite?”

Inspector Clouseau (Peter Sellers) asks a hotel manager in an old gag.

“No,” replies the manager. Clouseau bends to pet the dog and is immediately attacked.

“I thought you said your dog does not bite,” says a shocked Clouseau.

“That is not my dog,” says the manager.

Dog bites can happen to anyone. Even England’s Queen Elizabeth is not immune. A few months ago, Her Majesty was bitten by one of her pet Corgis when she attempted to break up a dogfight.

In their book, *Between Pets and People*, Alan Beck and Aaron Katcher say one in 250 people are bitten by pets each year. And these are only the incidents which are reported; the actual figures are probably much higher. Nearly 90 percent are bitten by dogs,

and the majority of victims are between age five and nine.

Far more are bitten by family dogs than by strays, despite the reputation of the latter. To avoid the possibility of doing something that might cause a dog bite, here are some of the authors’ cautions:

— Avoid going onto private property unless invited.

— When confronted with a threatening dog, do not run; this only increases the dog’s aggressiveness.

— Hold your ground. Demonstrate moderate dominance by telling the

dog firmly, “go home,” “no” or “sit.”

— Avoid direct eye contact, which the dog interprets as a challenge. Instead, act as if you do not care.

— When the dog begins to back away, slowly retreat also, keeping the dog in view without paying much attention to it. If the dog begins to come back, stop and wait until it moves off again.

— Do not try to outrun a dog on a bicycle. Stop, dismount and stand with the bicycle between you and the dog. Without something to chase, the dog may lose interest.

— Do not try to pet a strange, free-roaming dog.

— Do not be embarrassed to jump on a car, climb a tree or call for help if you are threatened.

— As a last resort, throw or pretend to throw an object at an aggressive dog.

— Do not be embarrassed to ask a dog owner to restrain the dog until it clearly recognizes you as a friend.

— Avoid any encounters with guard-trained dogs. Find out if any are patrolling before you walk in a new area.

— If you are threatened by a guard-trained dog, take off your jacket or something handy and give it to the dog to bite or pull. This might spare your own flesh.

— If you cannot deflect the attack, roll up in a ball, protect your face and ears with clenched fists, and wait for help or until the dog calms down. You may be able then to get away very slowly.

— Report all aggressive loose dogs or incidents of actual bites. ■



ATCS DAVID D. CLARK
Reprinted Courtesy *Ashore*



A 16-year-old cheerleader in Wisconsin twice had laser pointers aimed into her eyes as a prank. The first time it happened, she said everything looked green. When the second momentary exposure occurred, she temporarily lost sight in her right eye.

In another incident, a laser pointer caused a serious bus accident with multiple injuries. And in Florida, a man was arrested for scanning the ground near an off-duty police officer who thought the man had a laser-sighted firearm.

All of these situations are examples of ignorance. Users need to know the hazards of laser pointers. To start with, "laser" is an acronym that stands for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. It consists of five different hazard classifications which determine the extent of radiation-safety controls required (in normal laser operation only):

- Class I lasers, such as those used in CD and DVD players, are inherently safe for direct-beam viewing with no biological health effects.
- Class II lasers, such as those used by printers, pointers, range finders, supermarket scanners, and laser-tag equipment, emit power up to one milliwatt, which is about a million times more brilliant than a 100-watt light bulb.
- Class IIIa lasers, such as those used in printers, scanners, pointers, range finders, and the medical field, run from one to five milliwatts.
- Class IIIb lasers, such as those used in military range finders, target designators, printers and in the medical field, emit from five to 500 milliwatts.
- Class IV lasers, such as those used in target designators, range finders, industry and experimentation, have a power output greater than 500 milliwatts.

Laser pointers within the Class II and IIIa ranges are the most popular. They won't cause permanent eye damage in short viewing periods (blink reflex), but long-term viewing can cause flash blindness, glare and after-image effects that can last from sec-

onds to days. Extended exposure can cause retinal burns from the increased power and heat generated on the retinal wall. Children are at a higher risk because their eyes aren't fully developed and they aren't accustomed to such intense light.

Although new to the market, green laser pointers increase everyone's risk of eye injuries. The human eye is much more responsive to green light than to red, which means these green beams are especially bright.

By staying aware, asking questions, and applying common sense, the average user can protect against the problems posed by laser pointers. The standard regulatory body in the United States for manufacturers of any laser product is the Center for Devices and Radiological Health, a division of the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The FDA issued a warning on laser pointers in 1997, stating these products are generally safe when used as intended. However, recent price reductions have led to wider marketing, and the FDA is concerned about efforts promoting these products as children's toys. The FDA requires lasers to have warning labels which show their classification and tell users not to look directly into the beam.

One problem exists with this FDA requirement, though; it doesn't affect lasers imported into the United States. Those units may not have manufacturer certification or labeling attached. Your only safe avenue is to check for the FDA warning label before buying a laser pointer. Here are some other good rules to follow:

- Never stare at a laser light.
- Never shine a laser pointer at a person, animal or reflective surface, such as a mirror.
- Always purchase laser pointers with the output power, hazard classification, and warnings about their potential eye hazard shown on the label.
- Buy laser pointers that turn off when pressure is removed.
- Keep laser pointers out of the reach of children.
- Never view lasers through binoculars or telescopes. ■

COL SAM DICK
Director of Safety
HQ Air Force Space Command

Air Force off-duty fatalities have escalated during the past four years. On 1 May 02, after two fatalities in Air Force Space Command, the Commander directed that supervisors must review, face-to-face, their subordinates' plans prior to significant time off or leave. Since that directive, AFSPC has lost only one member, compared to 70 within the Air Force.

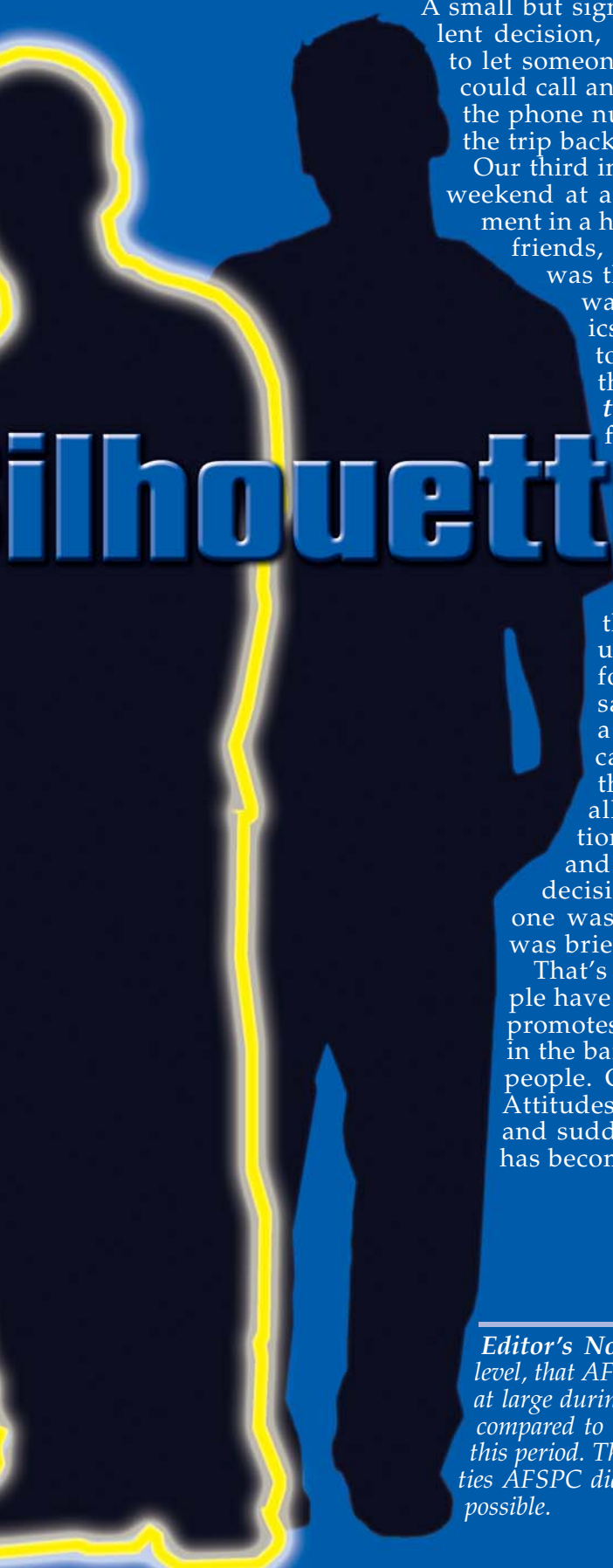
From 1 May 02 to 30 Apr 03, Air Force Space Command lost one of our members to a motor vehicle mishap. We all regret the loss, and we've sought to find reasons for it so we might prevent other losses of our people. In our quest to reduce fatalities this last year, we have had the direct involvement of supervisors at all levels and an increased attention to how our people spend their off-duty time. The results have been remarkable. In fact, the change can be characterized as "statistically significant" in the difference between AFSPC's success with mishaps and the Air Force at large.

The four silhouettes here represent the 3.7 uniformed members AFSPC expected to lose to off-duty fatalities 1 May 02-30 Apr 03, based on the rate of mishaps experienced Air Force-wide. One of them is marked to signify our single loss. But the others have stories, too.

One of those individuals was about to go on leave after finishing five days of 12-hour shifts (and we all know a 12-hour shift starts an hour or so before the shift and finishes an hour or so after the shift). His supervisor talked with him briefly and asked, simply, "How far is it, and how long will it take you to drive?" Of course, the distance was great, and the trip would take another eight or 10 hours, even without the rain and ice the forecasts were showing. Since every minute of leave is precious, our silhouette had intended to take off after work to be at his destination "in the morning." After a little *mentoring* and some good-natured *suggestions* from the supervisor, our member chose to get a good night's sleep, start early the next day, and make it to his destination the next afternoon, well rested, rather than dragging, half-asleep, through the day. With the early start, our member felt fresh and didn't even get anxious about staying within the speed limits, too. A good decision, augmented with a little supervisory concern, made a big difference.

Another of our individuals had been out

The Four S



partying with her friends and “just had two.” But one of the party-ers said to her, “Hey, you shouldn’t be driving. Why don’t we get a ride?”

A small but significant gesture, and our silhouette made an excellent decision, even more remarkable due to her impaired state, to let someone else drive. Their First Sergeant had told her she could call anytime and get a lift, and our silhouette still carried the phone number in her wallet. She even used her seatbelt for the trip back to her lodging.

Our third individual was out with friends on a warm summer weekend at a new swimming hole. It had been a long deployment in a hot, dry place, and it was great to be back home with friends, enjoying the water and the company. This place was the *perfect* spot: It had a high rock overlooking the water you could jump from and do all those acrobatics before you hit the surface. Our silhouette, prior to quaffing the second beverage of the afternoon, thought it might be wise to check out the water, *at the beach level*, prior to making the dramatic plunge from the rocks above. Good thing, because the water

depth was only a murky three feet under the rocks overhead. He did find a good 12-foot hole with a slightly lower cliff, but a much better landing space.

So, who were these three individuals? What is it that left their silhouettes unmarked and their lives unended? They are just three of over 19,000 uniformed members of AFSPC who each made thousands of decisions...and made those decisions with a small amount of foresight and a large amount of caring for each other, for their subordinates and for their own lives. A thousand-thousand decisions in all, and each one avoiding the hazards of the situation and surviving to continue to enjoy their families and friends. We could call it good fortune, but those decisions didn’t depend upon a “roll of the dice.” Each one was purposeful, even if the moment of the decision was brief.

That’s why AFSPC had such a remarkable year. Our people have consistently made good decisions in a process that promotes *leaders at all levels*, even at the level of a friend in the bar, to have a positive impact on the very lives of our people. Good decisions often foster other good decisions. Attitudes are transformed from thoughtless to thoughtful and suddenly good habits are the norm. This is how safety has become *our attitude*. ■

Editor’s Note: Statistical assessment shows, with a 95% confidence level, that AFSPC was significantly different in performance than the AF at large during the period 1 May 02-30 Apr 03. The expected casualties, compared to the AF level, would have been 3.7 fatalities for AFSPC in this period. This narrative provides some fictional stories of the 2.7 fatalities AFSPC did not experience, with some sample behaviors that made it possible.



What's Next? (Part II)

**Finding The Right Place To
Learn Serious Riding Skills**

Last issue, I talked generally about basic motorcycle riding skills. So you've been practicing your basic riding skills, and you're ready to take on some tougher challenges and bring your riding to a higher level. But where do you turn to learn more? Are you willing to rely on riding experience alone? What are some of the best ways to continue rider education beyond daily experience?

One of the first places to look for continuing rider education is right where you started. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation offers experienced rider courses (ERC) that help build on the basic skills riders learned in the Basic Rider Course. In addition, riders get to ride their own machines in the ERC and, in some cases, can bring a passenger along.

The main focus here is to provide higher level riding skills to riders in a safe learning environment. And this is one of the most important parts of learning—having the confidence and comfort in the environment to make learning possible.

So, you already have the skills of the ERC, but you are still looking for more learning opportunities? Great! You are the kind of rider we need more of.

Next step: the track. Tracks are not just for racing. A track is a great opportunity for anyone who rides a motorcycle to improve his or her skills. It doesn't matter if you ride the biggest hog on the road or a little bike to hop around town and to work. Skills are skills: You either have them, or you need to get them.

Some of the best learning happens on the track, and riding a motorcycle well is a skill that can be applied anywhere. Whether on the track, the highway, your favorite mountain road or on your own street, riding skills are what help you to manage the risks associated with riding a bike.

It takes more than just riding to your nearest track and taking a few laps to learn, though. First, take the time to research opportunities near you, and determine what you want to learn. What areas of riding do you need to work on? Usually you can identify these by what you are doing when bike riding makes you nervous.

Now, it's time to find an opportunity that can give you what you need to learn. For newer riders, or people early in their riding careers, take a look at schools that are backed by factories and have credible instructors that have a lot of experience.

There are many of these types of schools around the country including: Freddie Spencer's High Performance Riding School (backed by Honda), The Kevin Schwantz Suzuki School, CLASS Motorcycle

continued on next page

Back To School

No matter where your riding skills are, improving them is important to managing the risk of riding on the street. The schools listed here, I have personally attended. They, and others like them, are great resources for riders to gain experience and learn new techniques that can be used and practiced any time they ride, on any bike, on any road.

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced Rider Course (ERC) made the biggest impression on me regarding continuing rider education. It taught me what actually happens when I ride and how to correct my mistakes.

An added bonus: I was able to ride my own bike and practice in a safe environment. This allowed me to recognize how I had become complacent in my daily riding and to refocus my attention on continuing my training.

The ERC now has a great segment focusing on alcohol awareness that includes the use of Fatal Vision Simulator Goggles, which simulate the vision impairment at Blood Alcohol Content of 0.7 to 1.0. (*Editor's Note: See "Rose Colored Glasses," Summer 03 Road & Rec.*)

Passengers are also permitted in the ERC, as they are a vital part of the riding experience.

Freddie Spencer's High Performance Riding School taught me more about riding, and doing it safely, than any other school I have attended. It focused on the skills required to ride any motorcycle, along with some advanced techniques to improve control and safety.

Included were:

- A video, taped by an instructor riding behind me on the track, which was used for classroom instruction.

- A ride with Spencer himself, former three-time World Grand Prix Champion, given to all students to reinforce the techniques taught. This really helped me to know how the bike *should* feel, as opposed to how it felt when I was riding.

Remember, when you feel you have all the knowledge you need, it's time to stop riding, because riding a bike requires constant attention and a desire to improve your skills to reduce the risk associated with it.

Keep a clear head, ride responsibly and keep the rubber down and the shiny side up! ■



California Superbike School and American Supercamps, to name a few.

These schools usually focus on the basics of riding any motorcycle. They also have a good deal of classroom instruction, plenty of time on the track to put your instruction to use, one-on-one instruction and other features.

Some schools provide you with video of you riding on the track, to help you identify where you are falling short and where you are smokin'. Some schools provide the bikes to ride and meals, and some have different levels of instruction available. Of course, prices vary based on the level and quality of instruction you are provided.

Take the time after your track experiences to make notes on the areas you need to work on. Remember, you are the only person in control of how much you learn.

Once you have become comfortable riding on the track with other riders, take a look at local track days. These are days set aside by local riding clubs when you can take your bike, get it out on the track for a small price and practice the things you learned in earlier training sessions.

It is a safe place to try new things. The last thing you need is to practice your skills in the middle of downtown traffic. And, don't forget the best part: There are no black and white cars tracking you down and fining you on the track.

It is also a safe place because everyone is going

in the same direction, and riding at their own pace. It's a place where you can learn, continue to practice what you've learned, and stay fresh and ready to handle whatever may come your way on the street.

Let's face it, you will be a lot more confident in your ability to stop on the highway at 60 mph once you've done it a few times at faster speeds. And this is just one area to work on. Keep working on getting comfortable on your machine. On the basics you were taught in the beginning. Constantly evaluate yourself and set goals to improve.

So you have some basic skills. What are you going to do with them now? Put them in the back of your brain? They may not come to the front of your mind until the wrong time.

Put those skills to use and build on them! Reduce the risk you take each time you ride by improving your skills and continuing your rider education. It's up to you; you can learn through education, or experience. Which do you prefer? Think about that next time you ride! ■

(SSgt Daniel Short is nationally certified as a RiderCoach by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, and is a graduate of the Freddie Spencer High Performance Riding School and the New Mexico Motorcycle Safety Program. He has been riding motorcycles since 1977.)

Lifting! Lifting! Lifting!

Your autumn yard work probably includes more than just raking and carting away leaves. Repairing sprinkler heads, moving rocks, discarding dead tree limbs... whatever. All that lifting and carrying can lead to back trouble if you don't do it right, and most people simply don't lift correctly. They bend over, grasp an object and straighten up their backs to lift it. All the strain is put on the lower back, and sooner or later the back gives out.

For a clue to the right way, look at the weightlifters at athletic events. Although their form is specialized, they do one thing the rest of us should remember: They lift by using the power of their legs. To help control your lifting, and prevent back pain, there are basic rules everyone should follow. The National Safety Council suggests the following:

— Get a firm footing. Keep your feet parted, with one alongside and the other behind

the object.

— Keep your back straight.

— Tuck in your chin so the head and neck continue the straight back line.

— Grip the object with the whole hand. Get a firm grip with the palms of your hands, because the palms are stronger than the fingers alone.

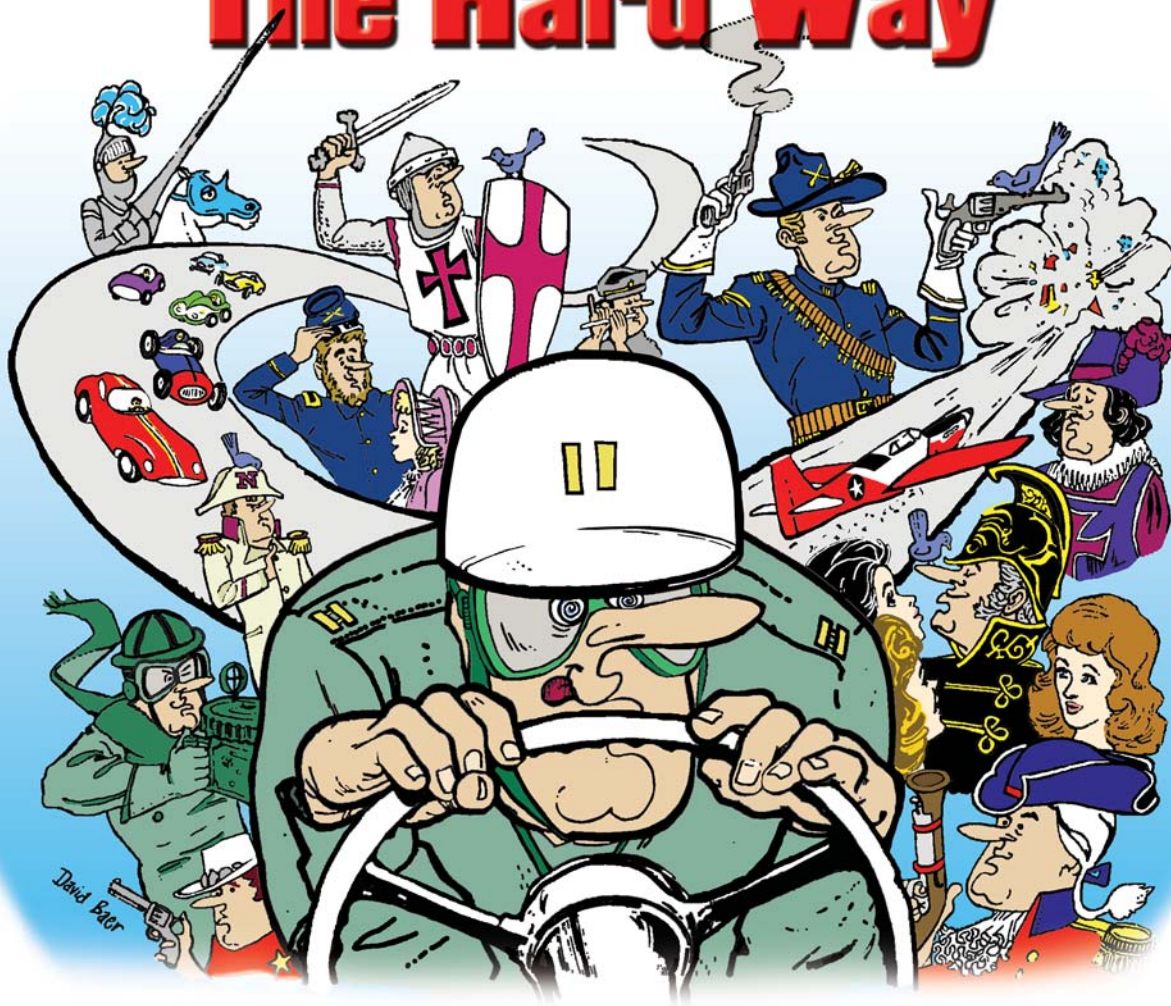
— Draw the object close to you, with arms and elbows tucked into the sides of the body to keep your body weight centered.

— Bend your knees, and lift with the legs. Let your powerful leg muscles do the work of lifting, not your weaker back muscles. Note especially that twisting during a lift is a common cause of back injury. If you have to turn with a load, change the position of your feet. By simply turning the forward foot out and pointing it in the direction you intend to move, the greatest danger of injury by twisting is avoided. ■

**CAUTION HEAVY
THINK
BEFORE
LIFTING**

When it comes to safety on the highway, Captain C. Z. Chumley learns...

The Hard Way



ARCHIE D. CALDWELL
Aerospace Safety, February 1963

(Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in Aerospace Safety (AKA Flying Safety) in 1963. Some dated references will be obvious, but the information is still pertinent, even 40 years later. "The more things change...")



The silver nose of the P-51 swung upward and to the left in a gentle arc. A muscular hand advanced throttle and RPM smoothly to 61 inches and 3000, and the world's greatest pilot, Captain C. Z. Chumley, lined the faltering ME-109 squarely in the piper of his K-14 sight.

"Five rounds per gun—no more," C. Z. said to himself, and flicked the trigger. The ME disappeared in a cloud of smoke and became victory number 42, or was it 43? C. Z. turned his head to look for other prey.

"LOOK OUT!"

"Where, what?"

"I said, 'Look out.' You were about to put your coffee cup in your eggs." Mrs. Chumley gave a sigh. "Honestly, you and your daydreaming. What were you doing this time, signing the Potsdam Agreement or charging San Juan Hill with Teddy?"

C. Z., now back to reality, only muttered as his love and best critic continued. "You swore you wouldn't dope off anymore—anytime, that you would..."

"I know, I know. And I haven't. My flying has taken on the safety aspect of a church convention. I know the flight handbook for our birds like Jack knows Bobby and Teddy. I've been a living example of flight planning, judgment and flight safety. I am..."

"You're late for work, that's what you are," Mrs. C. interrupted. "You'd better get going."

Chauncey took a final gulp of coffee, smartly deposited the cup in the center of Mrs. C's grits and eggs, gave a resounding kiss that missed by eight inches and shot out the door.

As he and the Jag purred along the freeway, C. Z. reflected on the tremendous improvement he had

made in becoming a professional, safe pilot. Why, it was only the other week that the Wing Commander himself had come to C. Z. and had given him a "well done" for saving a bird in an emergency. And hadn't he been instrumental (along with the rest of the squadron) for the flight safety nomination? Then there was the...

"GRRRFRROOM"—a '63 Stingray shot past Chaunce and the Jag.

"Johnny-come-lately—I'll show him!" C. Z. shoved both feet into the carbs and the roadster took off.

The freeway dissolved and became the straight-away at LeMans. "Only one more car to pass and I'll be right on Hill and Brabham." C. Z. mentally pictured himself in a sleek red racing car contending for the world's top racing honors. He hunched down a little more behind the wheel.

The speedometer was approaching 90 before C. Z. realized simultaneously that: (1) He was not at LeMans, (2) he could not catch up with the other driver, and (3) the right-hand turn onto the road leading to the base was coming up fast. C. Z. downshifted, hit the binders and started into the turn. It would have been neatly executed had not some gravel truck liberally coated that particular piece of roadway with what reacted with the fast-moving Jag as marbles on a bowling alley. Chumley remembered two fast 360-degree views of the landscape, then the front end of a blue staff car with a license plate that looked like a star coming up on his left, then little else.

As C. Z.'s eyes opened and his head cleared, faces in white uniforms became faces in white uniforms. He immediately recognized only the red face of his long-suffering commander. Chaunce groaned as the white uniforms eased what appeared to be his left leg encased in concrete into position on the bed. The colonel waited until all but he and the doctor were alone with C. Z. before he spoke.

"Well, Chumley, it must have taken some doing but you did it. You became one of the Air Force's 1963 motor vehicle accident statistics. You succeeded in alienating the affections of a general officer who up to this time had thought highly of our organization, and the Doc says you've caused my blood pressure to hit an all-time high. You violated every...!"

"I think I could have made it," C. Z. broke in weakly, "if there hadn't been that loose gravel; and if the staff car hadn't been right there at that time—"

The doctor cut Chaunce off. "If that staff car had been traveling faster, or had been a truck, you wouldn't be here now. I see other drivers like you first-hand, Captain. I try and fan a spark of life into their torn bodies and I'll tell you right now, I get sick when I see the waste of life that's brought about by just such idiotic actions behind the wheel as you pulled."

The long-suffering commander picked up the conversation. "Do you realize that in 1961 there were over 2800 auto accidents in the Air Force. Last

year's figure will probably top that total. Way over 350 officers and airmen were killed in auto accidents alone last year—people like you, who either forgot the basic principles of safe driving or had their good sense dulled by booze or drowsiness."

"But sir, my flying has become absolutely safe. I've been—"

"You've been half safe, that's what you've been," the Old Man shot back. "The Air Force assumed an obligation when they took you in—to train you, feed, clothe, educate and provide for your welfare. But this isn't where it ends. You have an obligation to the Air Force in payment. Part of this obligation includes some overt effort to stay alive, not only to fly safe. Flying is just one aspect of your obligation. If you or any other crewmember gets knocked off in an auto accident, your value as a piece of our combat machinery is just as worthless as if you had never left the used car business."

The Doc took a look at the colonel's flushed face. "Better calm down, Winton. I'll give you a mild sedative and we'll have a cup of coffee." He took the colonel's arm and started for the door.

"Court Martial's too good for him."

C. Z. flinched a little as the door closed.

The three weeks which had elapsed since the accident had allowed C. Z. to become ambulatory; blood pressure of the commander returned to normal; he and the doctor had put their heads together to come up with a fitting corrective action for the self-determined "world's foremost aviator."

"Morning, Colonel," Doc said, as the Old Man entered his office.

"Morning, Doc. Well, how did our corrective action work out?"

"Just fine, he's still sick. Your idea—of having Captain Chumley and every other member of this outfit who has been apprehended for speeding or involvement in an auto accident spend his week-end nights in the emergency receiving room of the hospital in town—sure makes believers out of them. Captain Chumley has been offering to trade his car for a bicycle."

"Well, some take a long time to learn."

"The only trouble," Doc offered, as he put match to cigarette, "is that some of 'em learn too late and never get a second chance." ■

(Editor's Postscript: You probably noticed the same statistics we did in this "Walter Mitty"-esque story: 2800 auto mishaps, 350 dead. This was based on an active duty Air Force of over 815,000. Last year's figures are: 330 mishaps and 52 deaths in an active duty force of 364,000. So auto mishaps are vastly improved over those long-ago days of the "New Frontier." But guess what? They're still not good enough. The Secretary of Defense recently challenged the services to a 50 percent reduction in mishaps and accident rates. What can you personally do to move us toward that goal?)



Gun Safe

JERRY ROOD
Managing Editor

On the subject of firearms safety, the experts all seem to agree on the basic rules. What follows is a compilation of tips from gun and ammunition manufacturers, safety organizations and advocacy groups.

Knowledge is power

Know your gun; be familiar with how it operates mechanically, and how it handles.

The right stuff

Use only the proper ammunition for your specific firearm.

Clean up

A clean, well-maintained firearm is a safer firearm. Clean your gun after each use, before you store it, and when you take it out of storage.

Out of sight...

Store your guns where people you haven't authorized (especially kids) can't get to them. Store them unloaded, with the ammunition in a separate locked place.

Change is bad

Don't modify or alter your gun

Don't bet on it

The gun's mechanical safety device is a good thing, but never rely on it alone. Know proper gun handling.

"I didn't know..."

ALWAYS assume any gun is loaded. Even if you were the last one to touch it, even if you checked it at that time.

Ready, set, load

Leave the gun unloaded until you're ready to fire it.

Watch where you point that thing

Always keep the gun's muzzle pointed in a safe direction.

This means: Point it *only* at something you're prepared to shoot.

Positive ID

Know your target, and know what is beyond it. This includes:

1. NEVER fire in the direction of people, and
2. Don't shoot at water or hard surfaces.

Keep away

Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to fire.

Check it

Verify that the gun, particularly the barrel, is free from obstructions before you fire.

Move out

Whenever you are transporting a firearm, make sure it is unloaded.

Carry over

Unload your gun before you climb a tree or go through a fence; this is to prevent accidental firing.

Wear protection

Wear protective eyewear and earplugs when you are shooting.

Note: This is a good idea when you are observing others, too.

Last word

When you're shooting, there is one word for alcohol and drugs (of any kind): *Don't*. No, not even just a little bit. ■

'Tis The Season To Be... HUNTING



be a good idea to get a refresher. Another way to approach the course is to go with a young hunter and help teach the next generation of hunters.

Hunting is one of the safest sports in terms of the ratio of people involved to people injured or killed. However, due to the nature of the sport, most accidents have drastic results. If hunting is to survive as a safe sport, hunters must apply Risk Management when they go into the field.

The most frightening hazard when hunting is the risk of being shot by another hunter. There are several controls which, if thought about ahead of time and implemented properly, will reduce the risk of becoming an accidental target.

1. The proper dress for the type of season open.

— BLAZE ORANGE during deer season. The more the better (the deer can't see it, but other hunters can). Most states have a minimum amount that you must wear, so check your local game laws.

— NEVER wear blue or red during turkey season. You might be mistaken for a turkey.

— NEVER wear brown or white during deer season. These are the primary colors of a deer and you may get shot at by mistake. It is important to note that these rules apply to all people in the woods during hunting season, no matter what the reason.

2. Never carry a deer or turkey on your shoulder through the woods. Carry it as low as possible. It is also a good idea to mark it with blaze orange to prevent someone else from shooting at it.

3. Never shoot at sound or movement. Make sure you identify your target before you shoot. Make sure you also check the background. Don't shoot if you're uncertain where the bullet might end up.

4. If you see another hunter, but are concealed from his view, step out into the open so he can see you.

5. Make sure everyone in the hunting party knows where the others are hunting, and pre-coordinate any movements.

6. Use a flashlight and unloaded weapon when moving in darkness. Always carry a spare flashlight.

7. Never use your scope for binoculars.

8. When in a ground stand or a blind, keep a rock or tree to your back to prevent getting shot in the back.

9. Always handle firearms as if they were loaded. Never assume someone is handing you an unloaded weapon. Visually check it, and then treat it as if it is still loaded.

10. Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you plan to return. Never hunt alone. ■

Army Countermeasure, Oct 1997

As the days begin to shorten and the evening air turns briskly cool, many of us will feel a quiet desperation and almost longing for the woods on a bitter cold day. This feeling is most commonly referred to as "buck fever." You can almost taste the excitement as many hunters around the country eagerly await the opening of their favorite season.

Most of us won't think of Risk Management as part of our preparations for the onset of the season. However, Risk Management is necessary if we want to see the next season. We must apply the same thought process to our recreation as we do our work. It is imperative to protect ourselves from hazards that each type of hunt presents.

Almost every state now has a requirement for a hunter safety course if you were born after a certain date. These courses are interesting and informative, and they have significantly reduced hunting accident rates. If you have never attended one, or if it's been a while, it might

Driving Fatigue

JERRY ROOD
Managing Editor

I was dead tired. I'd been on the highway all day, and it was evening. The curves in the road were all I had to hold my attention as I wound through a canyon. I held my eyes open only through conscious effort, and my consciousness was fading along with the light.

I opened my eyes and realized three things: One, I had been asleep; for how long I didn't know, probably only seconds. Two, I was on a long, straight, downhill stretch of road. Three, I was on a (fortunately) very wide shoulder, headed laterally at a granite rock face.

Suddenly wide awake—and very scared—I braked to a stop while steering back parallel to the roadway. I drove on slowly and found an exit, where I took a short nap before continuing to my destination.

A number of you readers have had similar experiences of fatigue behind the wheel on long drives. And you haven't been completely unaware of its onset. You've noticed the stiff back, the burning eyes, the inattentiveness, and maybe even erratic driving, like drifting, abnormal speed or failure to follow traffic signs.

And maybe you've had an experience like mine, when another couple of seconds with your eyes closed would have been your last on this earth. Frightened you, didn't it? It should.

Today's comfortable, climate-controlled, cruise-controlled highway machines make it that much easier to relax behind the wheel. And the monotonous sights and sounds on long trips can cause the trance-like condition that the safety folks call "highway hypnosis," which will dull your senses and slow your reaction time.

These tips, adapted from the National Safety Council, should help you combat the effects of driving fatigue:

Get enough rest. If you don't get seven or eight hours of sleep the night before a trip, you're invit-

ing fatigue. Also, don't start a trip late in the day (*especially* not after a full day at work). You need to be fresh and alert for long-distance driving.

If possible, don't drive alone. Passengers can take turns driving and also serve as conversation partners to keep you awake.

Avoid long drives at night. The glare of lights, both on your dashboard and outside your car, increases the danger of highway hypnosis.

Adjust your car's environment so that it helps keep you awake and alert. In summer, keep the temperature cool, with open windows or air conditioning. In winter, use frugal amounts of heat. Turn the radio volume up, and switch stations frequently, but avoid soft, "elevator" music. Do not use cruise control; keep your body involved with the driving.

Watch your posture. Drive with your head up and your shoulders back. Tuck your buttocks against the seat back. Legs should not be fully extended, but flexed at about a 45 degree angle.

Take frequent breaks. At least every two hours, stop at a gas station, restaurant or rest stop. Get out of the car, walk around, even jog or do calisthenics. Exercise fights fatigue.

In addition to exercise breaks, stop for light meals and snacks. Avoid alcohol entirely. (Alcohol is a depressant, and you don't have to be drunk to fall asleep at the wheel. Even one drink can be enough to induce fatigue.)

Don't allow your eyes to become fatigued or hypnotized. Wear sunglasses to fight glare (but never wear sunglasses at night).


Finally—and this is an emergency maneuver; don't try it as a common driving technique—if all else fails and you notice the danger signs of fatigue: Take a nap. Find a safe, guarded rest area, truck stop, or service station. Even a 20-minute nap may refresh you enough to get to a hotel or motel.

That last one is what I did on that long-ago cross-country trip. But I'd have been wiser to stop a couple of hours earlier at the motel in that small town.

Another couple of seconds... ■

Gotta Get There... There's A Party Waiting

Courtesy Ashore
LT. TIM HAWLEY
VAW-117



Being a Type-A aviator, I left work on a Wednesday evening with the intent of arriving at my destination early Thursday morning. Even after a full day of work, I was so pumped by the anticipation of my trip that I didn't realize I was already tired before I even started.

I quickly became drowsy as the trip wore on. I cannot count the number of times I almost drove off the road or swerved into an oncoming vehicle. I was not only a danger to myself, I was also a danger to others traveling on the highway. A cautious person would have cried "uncle," spent the night in a hotel, then continued the journey rested. But not I.

Thanksgiving weekend was approaching and our squadron was going to have four days off. All of us were making our holiday plans. Most of the squadron personnel were looking forward to hosting or visiting friends and family members who lived around the area. I planned a Thanksgiving weekend with friends who lived more than 500 miles away.

Forget the airline ticket; I had just bought a new high-speed, low-drag, expensive automobile that yearned to be driven at every opportunity. This particular weekend seemed like a great chance to evaluate the car's performance.

I arrived at my friend's house Thanksgiving morning and grabbed some sleep before the festivities. After a short nap, I awoke to a loud party atmosphere with a crowd of guests. Never wanting to miss a party, I joined in. I partied well into the night and disregarded any physical need for rest. Friday was a little more restful, but I still had time to party with my friends.

On Saturday, I decided to start home early and stop for the night if I felt tired. However, my press-

on attitude led me astray. History repeated itself, and fatigue almost caused me to swerve into other cars, drive off the road and, in my opinion, create hazards matched only by a drunk driver.

I did get home OK. However, when I started thinking about the many close calls I had, I decided that I had to change my attitude about driving long distances. No more long trips without rest stops for me.

Most military people have a strong desire to accomplish their missions. On the job we are sometimes forced to push the limits of our physical and emotional thresholds. However, we don't have to do this during our off-duty time. No activity is worth putting ourselves or others at risk. ■

What I Learned On My Summer Vacation



MSGT DAVID H. ZIBELL
22 TRS/TSDD
Fairchild AFB WA

I am a training NCO at the USAF Survival School at Fairchild AFB, Washington. I grew up in the eastern part of the state. Traditionally, each summer my family and some friends take a vacation to Waitts Lake. The water rec vehicles we all share are four Polaris Wave Runners, one ski boat and practically every water toy that can be towed behind a boat.

This outing was going to be different than previous years. All our kids are of legal age to ride the Wave Runners and couldn't wait for this vacation. But they also have drivers licenses and need to support their fun, so they all had to work while the parents stayed at the lake.

Normally, we would go through more than \$500 worth of gas, but this year the weather started out with low temperatures for this area. So, the water activities were slowed down until the last week, when the temperature went up to the high 80s or low 90s. By then, the lake was getting full of exuberant vacationers.

On Sunday, my brother-in-law brought his boat out so his son could do some wake boarding. His only problem was he needed a spotter. "I'll do that!" says I. I don't get many chances to ride in a boat because I'm usually the operator. When we got going around the lake it was getting difficult for him to find a path through the boats. Then there was this boater who liked to cut in front of other boats and cause them to take evasive action. He wasn't pulling anyone but had unrestrained small children in the boat jumping

up and down as they hopped wakes. After the second time he cut us off, we decided to go back to the dock and wait for things to settle down. As we were heading back, he cut off another boat. This was getting scary. I got a set of the boating regulations and went after this guy to inform him of his wrongdoings. As I started following him, he cut off yet another boat that was pulling a tuber. I just hit my limit. I pulled up onto his starboard side and motioned for him to stop. After he stopped, I asked him to kill his motor. Then I proceeded to instruct him in the laws of boating and asked if he had ever read the boating laws. You know what his answer was. So I gave him my copy and told him to read it. I didn't intend to embarrass him in front of the kids, but it's better than picking them out of the water on a backboard.

Monday. We got out and did some tubing, skiing and wake boarding, and ran the Wave Runners. It was getting toward evening, and the lake was filling up with boaters and Wave Runners as people got off work. The lake was so busy we decided to sit around and play card games. While playing Hearts, I got nailed with the Queen of Spades. My wife, who was sitting across from me, shouted an astonished expletive. I looked at her and said, "Thanks." "No," she said, "somebody was just hit on the lake!" As we got up to look, there was a boat blocking the incident.

Then a man in the boat started yelling for an EMT (emergency medical technician). My wife and I ran to our boat to see if we could help. The man in the other boat was waving his orange flag, requesting help. As we pulled by the resort, I yelled at the folks on the dock to get Carol, an EMT who worked for the local Volunteer Ambulance. She wasn't there.

When I got to the scene, there was a man floating

in the water with a woman at his feet crying. I asked what had happened. The man in the boat said the victim was just hit in the back—run over—by the woman on a Wave Runner. He wasn't moving, but he was conscious and breathing. I threw on my life jacket, grabbed my kneeboard and jumped in, leaving my wife in the boat. Two other people jumped in to help. One of them did not have a life jacket, so my wife threw him a jacket (self safety first).

As I got up to the man, he was talking and could move all his extremities. I checked for any major bleeding, and there was none. I felt we shouldn't move him, but we needed to get him to shore. We slid the kneeboard under him to support his back and head. Then we very carefully slid his life jacket up to support his head and neck. Some of the people wanted to place him in the boat and take him to shore. At this time I did not know the extent of his back injuries and the kneeboard was not enough support to lift him out. I told the other three individuals that we needed to slowly swim him to shore.

The water acted as a natural support, and we would leave him in the water until the ambulance arrived. The only other thing that might have worked would have been to place another life jacket under his lower back, but this might have forced his head into the water. The kneeboard seemed to be working fine.

The swim was about 200-300 feet. We went very slowly and got him to the shoreline. About halfway to the shore, the deputy sheriff showed up and told us the Chewelah (Cha-Wee-Lah) Volunteer Ambulance was en route. After we got him to shore, I sat there in the water, holding the kneeboard with my feet and using my hands to stabilize his neck. He was conscious and talking to me, but he was in pain.

The ambulance showed up about 15 minutes after we got to the shore. One of the ladies in the ambulance was our EMT friend, Carol, who was also one of the owners of the resort. Four other emergency personnel came out and pulled the backboard out as Carol took control of his head. We floated the man into deeper water so they could get the backboard under him. After I helped load him into the ambulance, the sheriff started to get statements from people who had witnessed the accident.

I learned some sobering lessons from my summer vacation: Never believe that everyone on the water has read the local watercraft laws, and/or will abide by them. There are people who just don't care, or just don't know. Then there are those who are there for the first time and don't know how to handle the watercraft. The first incident was very close to a Darwin Award. After I talked to the man, he very politely apologized and left the lake. I hope it opened his eyes to how dangerously he was behaving.

For the young man who was hurt, it was his girlfriend's first time on a Wave Runner. She didn't realize that they don't have brakes, and that they lose steering ability when the motor is not running. From what



I heard, t h e y just got on the l a k e and she was too close.

T h e y w e r e m o v i n g very fast and he stopped to look back to see where she was, and that's when she hit him.

Final outcome from the Wave Runner accident: compressed spine and ruptured spleen. Carol did tell me we saved his life by the way we moved him. She basically said that by keeping him in the water and stabilizing him we prevented any further damage to his spine. The girlfriend did get a ticket from the Sheriff and I heard it was over \$300.

For my family, we require our kids to take the Washington State Boater Safety Course, and have to pass the test to receive the certificate. You can accomplish this on the Internet and learn the laws as well.

After this accident, I realized that if I see a boater or watercraft operator doing something wrong on the lake I will most likely follow the operator until it's safe to stop him or her. Then I will let that individual know what he or she is doing wrong and present them with the local boating regulations, because I do not want to pull anyone else out of the water again. ■

(Editor's Note: Be sure you know the "rules of the road" for your area before you go boating or engage in any water sport. A good place to start is with your state parks or game and fish department, or you can contact the local Coast Guard Auxiliary office.)



Snapshot on Safety

Automobile Fatalities

- A passenger was fatally injured when the vehicle in which he was riding turned in the path of and was struck by an oncoming vehicle.

- A driver and passenger were killed when, after being out all evening and en route back to the base, the operator lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle departed the two-lane undivided roadway and struck a tree nearly head-on. The passenger was wearing his seatbelt but the driver was not.

- An airman was on his way to work when he encountered two slower moving vehicles in the same lane he was traveling. Upon passing the vehicles, he applied the brakes to reenter his lane. However, he lost control, spinning into the guardrail along the oncoming lane. Unable to avoid a collision, an oncoming truck collided with the airman's vehicle.

- An airman, a recent graduate from technical school, was en route back to his home station when a vehicle coming from the opposite direction lost control, crossed the 30-foot wide median and struck the airman's vehicle. The airman sustained fatal injuries.

- Two airmen were returning from a three-day weekend when the operator lost control of the vehicle. The vehicle departed the road and struck a tree. The operator was severely injured and the passenger was killed. The operator was not wearing his seatbelt but the passenger was.

- A driver lost control of his vehicle while passing in a no passing zone, departed the roadway and struck a concrete utility pole. The road was wet from an earlier rain, and the operator was exceeding the speed limit. He was not wearing his seatbelt.

- An NCO, who had been drinking and was driving too fast for conditions, lost control of his vehicle, departed the highway, struck a tree and was fatally injured. The operator was not wearing his seatbelt.

- An Air Force member and his son were killed when he lost control of his vehicle on a narrow mountainous road. The vehicle departed the roadway and went off an embankment, flipped on its side and struck a tree.

- An airman was fatally injured when he lost control of his vehicle. It departed the roadway and struck a tree.





Motorcycle Fatalities

- An experienced motorcycle rider was en route to technical school when, while traveling at approximately 70 mph, he struck a deer and was killed. The motorcyclist had several years riding experience, was trained and was wearing a helmet.
- An airman lost control of his motorcycle when traveling at a high rate of speed, encountered a curve in the road, applied his brakes and struck a curb, causing the motorcycle to summersault. The airman was not wearing a helmet.
- An airman was fatally injured when he lost control of his motorcycle and struck a road sign. The airman had just purchased the motorcycle three days before. The airman received the required training some two years prior to the mishap and purchasing his motorcycle.
- A passenger was fatally injured when the operator lost control of the motorcycle and departed the roadway. The untrained operator's BAC was .09, and the

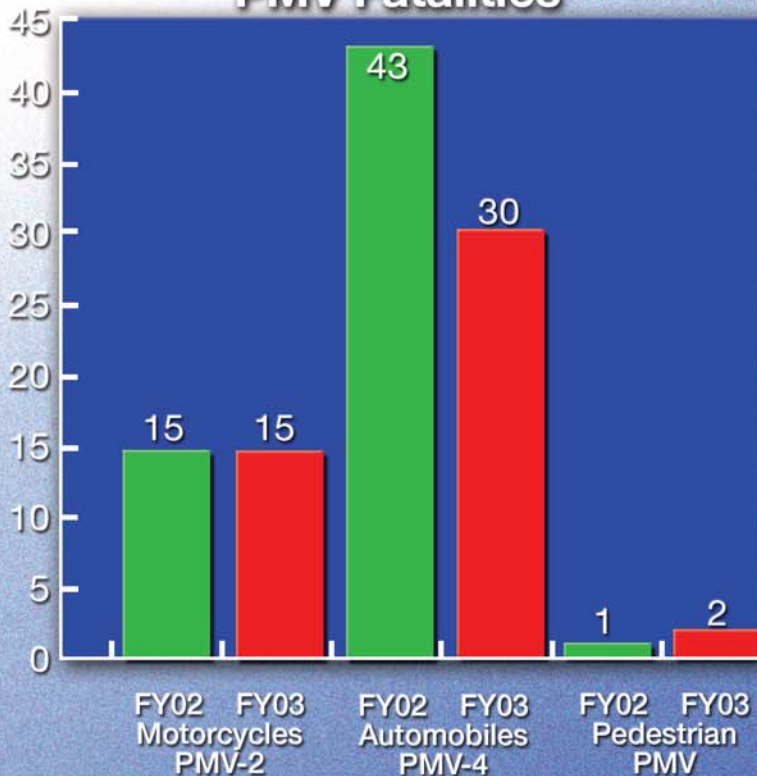
passenger's was .21. Neither was wearing a helmet.

- A motorcyclist had just completed passing a fellow rider when he entered a right-hand curve. Due to excessive speed, he allowed his motorcycle to enter the oncoming lane of traffic. In an attempt to avoid an oncoming vehicle, he swerved to the right, departed the roadway and was thrown from the motorcycle.
- A motorcyclist was on his way home when he attempted to change lanes and was struck by and subsequently run over by another vehicle. Although he was wearing a helmet, he sustained a major head injury and died three days later.
- An NCO was on his way to work when he failed to negotiate a curve, departed the paved surface and struck a road sign, sustaining fatal injuries.
- A senior NCO was fatally injured when the motorcycle he was riding collided head-on with a truck.

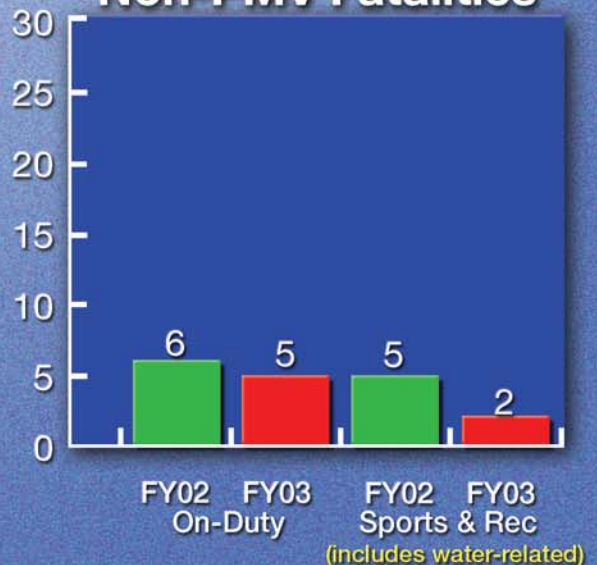
On-Duty (Industrial) Fatalities

- An airman was fatally injured when working on a back-up generator. While performing routine maintenance and attempting to locate a leak, the airman's sleeves were caught by the running cooling fan, pulling the airman into the running fan. He sustained fatal injuries. ■

PMV Fatalities



Non-PMV Fatalities



FY03 Third Quarter Fatalities (as of 30 June 03)



It's In The Cards... If You Drink & Drive

