

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

ROAD & REC

Volume 14, Number 1

Winter 2002



ROAD & REC

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Did Someone Ski Over My Head?

LT TROY WILLIAMS
VAQ-133
Courtesy, *Ashore*, Winter 00-01

If you are acquainted with the San Juan and Skagit Valley areas of western Washington, you are undoubtedly familiar with the cold, wet dreariness associated with Northwest winters. As a resident of the area, the only ritual that keeps me from checking into the nearest asylum is a weekend trek to the Whistler ski resort in nearby British Columbia for 48 hours of heart-racing, ski-slapping moguls. The thrill of sailing through a sea of "bumps," with just the slightest bit of stability, is indescribable.

On one of my weekend trips, the day was bright and sunny. The night before, the mountain had received an additional foot of fresh powder. The runs were smooth — even the bumps felt like feather pillows. I had fallen several times, but since the snow felt like down, I hardly felt the impact. Because of these great conditions, I thought this would be a great time to improve my skills and be more aggressive on the slope.

That's what I was doing when I was halfway down the slope and planted my skis to "bunny hop" around a specific mogul. My skis locked in the snow.

Unfortunately, one ski disconnected, and my body kept driving down the slope. When I "hit" the ground, I remember thinking for a brief moment that

it was simply another fall. I started to look up for my right ski when suddenly it found me. The extra powder had prevented the brake on the ski from adhering to the slope, and its momentum had sent it rocketing down the hill after me.

My head was facing uphill as the ski struck me just above my right eye. At first, I thought someone had skied over my head. However, as I rolled over to look down the hill, I saw my ski continuing on its own for another 50 yards. I grabbed the spot where the ski had hit my head and, to my amazement, felt a knot the size of a tangerine bulging from under my ski hat.

After about five minutes, I gathered my composure and hobbled down to my other ski, reconnected it and skied to the nearest chalet, where my ski partner was able to call a medic.

Although the knot wasn't aesthetically pleasing, I had no lengthy headaches or blurred vision. However, I was downed from flying for four days because I couldn't fit my flight helmet over the bump.

I realize I could have easily been knocked unconscious and have been downed from flying for several months. Now, before any ski trip, I not only bring my skis, gloves, and goggles, but also my new ski helmet. If I had been wearing one prior to the incident, I would have enjoyed the remainder of the day skiing and had a few extra hours of flight time as well. ■

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Short Circuits



Suspect Mail

In view of the number of anthrax-contaminated letters that have been delivered through the mail system, the U.S. Postal Service, FBI, and the Centers for Disease Control offer the following guidance when handling letters or parcels.

Tips to recognizing potentially dangerous mail:

- Is it unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you?
- Is it addressed to someone no longer in your organization or is the address outdated?
- Is there no return address or is the return address one which cannot be verified as legitimate?
- Is it of unusual weight, given its size, or is it lopsided or oddly shaped?
- Is it marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential"?
- Does it have protruding wires, a visible powder residue, strange odors or stains?
- Does it have an excessive number of postage stamps with or without a postmark?
- Does it show a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address?
- Are there misspelled words in the address?

How to handle suspicious mail:

- Avoid handling any suspicious pieces of mail.
- Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
- If you open an envelope and powder spills out, do not try to clean up the powder.
- Place the envelope or package in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of the contents.
- If you do not have a container, then COVER the envelope or package with anything (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove this cover.
- Immediately notify your supervisor and contact OSI and security forces.
- Make sure that damaged or suspicious packages are isolated. Leave the room and close the door or section-off the area to prevent others

from entering.

- If the piece of mail has been handled, have each person who has touched it wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water
- If possible, list and provide contact information for all the people who were in the room or area, especially those who had actual contact with the powder. Give this list to public health/medical personnel so that they can provide medical follow-up. Also provide the list to law enforcement/security forces personnel for further investigation.
- Remove contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag or some other container that can be sealed. The clothing bag should be given to emergency responders for proper handling.
- As soon as possible, shower with soap and water. **Do not use bleach or other disinfectants on your skin.**
- Report to the base medical treatment facility for assessment and potential treatment.

Much of our thinking and preparation in the past has been oriented toward explosives. However, recent events and common sense reasoning leads us to consider the chemical and biological threat to a greater degree. Air Force personnel handling mail should review procedures in DoD 4525.6-M, Air Force Supplement 1, Official Mail Manual. For more information on anthrax, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov, look under the "Contents" section and click on "Health Topics A-Z." Also look under the "Spotlights" section and click on "Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response." In addition, the Official DoD Website for the Anthrax Immunization Program can be viewed at www.anthrax.osd.mil.

Anthrax Facts

The following information on anthrax was provided by the CDC:

- Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by the spore-forming bacterium ***Bacillus anthracis***. Anthrax most commonly occurs in hooved animals and can also infect humans.
- Symptoms of the disease vary depending on

continued on page 7

FBI Advisory

If you receive a suspicious letter or package

What should you do?

- 1 Handle with care
Don't shake or bump
- 2 Isolate and look for indicators
- 3 Don't Open, Smell or Taste
- 4 Treat it as Suspect!
Call 911



- Possibly Mailed from a Foreign Country
- Excessive Postage
- No Return Address
- Restrictive Markings
- Misspelled Words
- Addressed to Title Only or Incorrect Title
- Badly typed or written
- Protruding Wires
- Lopsided or Uneven
- Rigid or Bulky
- Strange Odor
- Wrong Title with Name
- Oily Stains, Discolorations, or Crystallization on Wrapper
- Excessive Tape or String

If parcel is open and/or a threat is identified...

For a Bomb

Evacuate Immediately
Call 911 (Police)
Contact local FBI

For Radiological

Limit Exposure - Don't Handle
Distance (Evacuate area)
Shield yourself from object
Call 911 (Police)
Contact local FBI

For Biological or Chemical

Isolate - Don't Handle
Call 911 (Police)
Wash your hands with soap and warm water
Contact local FBI

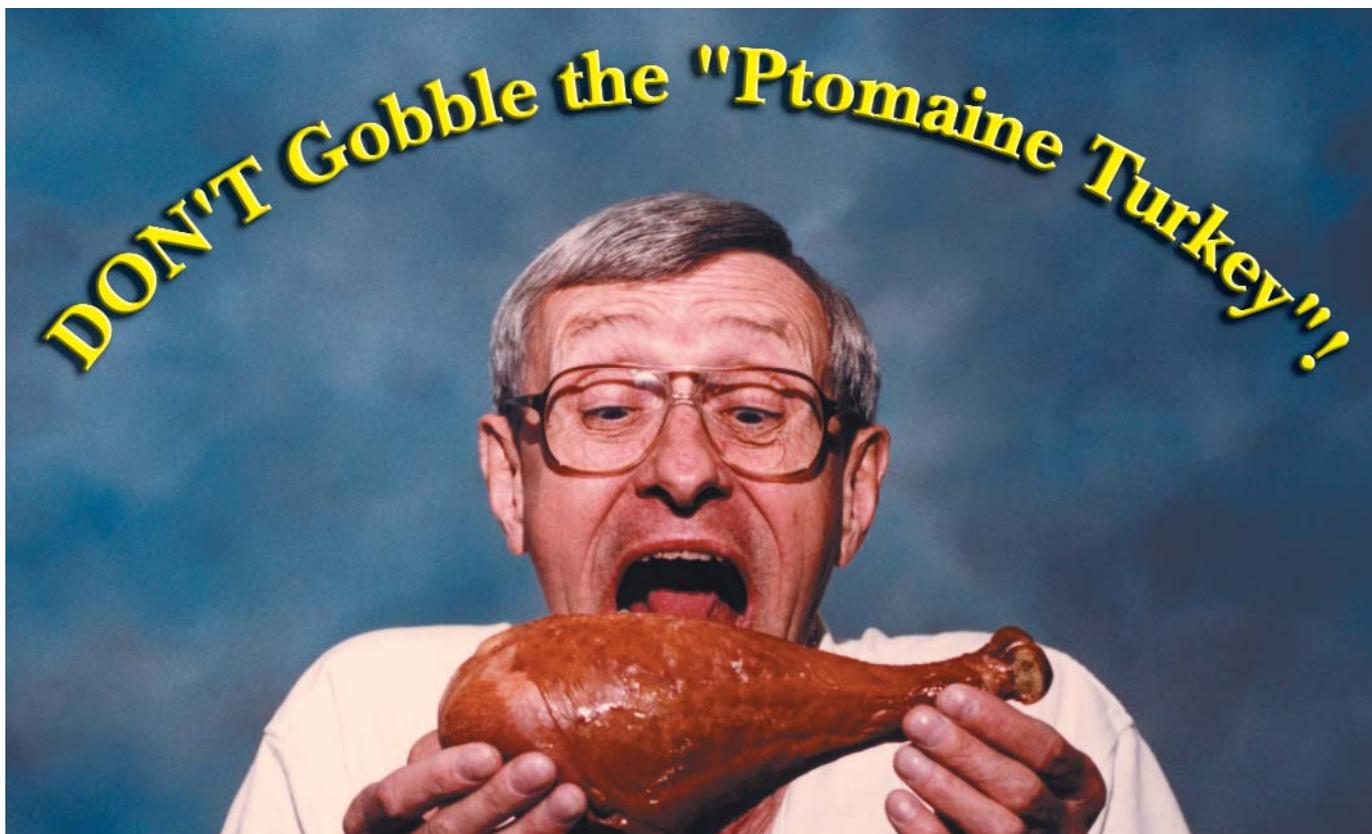


Police Department _____

Fire Department _____

Local FBI Office _____

(Ask for the Duty Agent, Special Agent Bomb Technician, or Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinator)



USAF Photo by Dennis Carlson

Editor's Note: After eating the scalloped potatoes at last year's Safety Center Christmas party, many of the partiers went home and "galloped" to the restroom. Whatever was wrong with the potatoes was bad enough that several people called in sick the next day. The "Merry" in their Christmas had been replaced with Milk of Magnesia. Not a particularly fun way to start the holiday season.

Most **foodborne** illnesses in the home can be prevented by consumers. Unsanitary food preparation practices are major contributors to outbreaks of foodborne illness. Errors made in shopping, transporting, storing, preparing, and serving food can allow bacteria to survive and multiply. Food prepared a day or more in advance, if handled improperly, can allow bacteria more time to multiply. Cross contamination — the contamination of food by bacteria from other food, from utensils and work surfaces, and from persons handling or preparing food — is another important factor in foodborne illness.

Food Safety Tips

- Do not buy cans or glass jars with dents, cracks, bulging lids, or leaking or rusted seams. Commissary canned goods are checked by veterinary food inspectors.
- Do not eat raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.
- Cook raw food thoroughly to kill any bacteria pre-

sent. Use a clean, sanitized metal stem cook's thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food.

- Reheat leftovers thoroughly. Reheat to a minimum internal temperature of 165 F. Boil liquids.
- Refrigerate cooked meats, fish, and poultry in shallow containers. Remove any stuffing and refrigerate separately.
- When shopping, do your grocery shopping last. Pick up perishable foods and other foods that require refrigeration after nonperishable items. Refrigerate perishable foods promptly.
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator, air temperature should be 40 F or below.
- Store canned goods in a cool, dry place and use them within a year or by the manufacturer's expiration date. Never store canned or bottled foods in direct sunlight, in warm areas such as over a stove, or in damp areas. If canned goods become rusted, especially along seams, throw them away. If you open canned food that is foamy, discolored, or off odor, do not taste it. Throw it away.
- Do not thaw food on the counter as bacteria grow rapidly at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator or in a microwave oven immediately before cooking.
- Prevent cross contamination —
 - Wash hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water and dry them with a clean paper towel before handling food and after handling raw foods; especially meat, fish, and poultry.
 - Do not use a dish towel to dry your hands.

Bacteria on the dish towel can “cross contaminate” clean hands.

- After cooking meats, do not use the same serving tray that was used to transport the uncooked meats to the grill or to the stove.

- Always use separate serving utensils for different dishes that are served.

- Keep work areas clean. Wash utensils and cutting boards in hot, soapy water, rinse with clean hot water, and air dry before handling foods; especially after handling raw meats, fish, or poultry. Do not store uncooked food like meats, fish, or poultry above cooked foods or foods that you eat raw.

- A plastic cutting board is generally easier to keep clean. If you have a board made of wood, it should be hard maple and free of cuts and gouges. After washing with hot soapy water, rinse cutting boards with hot water, then sanitize them using a

solution of one teaspoon of unscented household bleach in a gallon of warm water. This same strength bleach solution can be used to sanitize counter tops and other items.

- Keep pets away from food preparation and cooking.

- If your children help, teach them to wash their hands before handling food, washing dishes or putting clean dishes away.

- Contaminated foods may contain bacteria that produce toxins that are resistant to destruction even when the food is properly cooked or reheated. Do not take chances, if you suspect there is a problem, throw the food out. ■

Article reprinted courtesy U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine **CHPPM Today** magazine.

Short Circuits ... continued from page 4



how the disease was contracted, but usually occur within seven days of exposure. The serious forms of human anthrax are ***inhalation anthrax, cutaneous anthrax, and intestinal anthrax.***

- ***Cutaneous anthrax*** is the most common naturally occurring form and the most easily treated. It occurs after skin exposure to anthrax spores and is most commonly manifested by a skin ulcer with a black center.

- Initial symptoms of ***inhalation anthrax*** may resemble a common cold. After several days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. Inhalation anthrax is often fatal.

- ***Intestinal anthrax*** may follow the consumption of contaminated food and is characterized by an acute inflammation of the intestinal tract. Initial signs of nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting and fever are followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood and severe diarrhea.

- Direct person-to-person spread of anthrax is extremely unlikely, if it occurs at all. Therefore, there is no need to immunize or treat contacts of persons ill with anthrax, such as household contacts, friends or coworkers, unless they were also exposed to the same source of infection.

- The anthrax vaccine is proven safe and effective and may be the only way of preventing infection for persons who are unaware that they have been exposed.

- In persons exposed to anthrax, infection can be prevented with antibiotic treatment.

- Early antibiotic treatment is essential — delay lessens chances for survival. Anthrax is usually susceptible to penicillin, doxycycline, and fluoroquinolones. ■

A Not-So-Merry Christmas

Courtesy, *ASHORE*, Winter 2001
LTJG. BRAD SPARKS
Assistant Aircraft Division Officer
VAW-117

Before joining the Navy, I was a firefighter/EMT. On Christmas Day, 1993, I saw how a drunk driver can hurt more people than just himself. I was working a 24-hour shift to fill in for someone who wanted the day off. After we finished our Christmas dinner, we got a call about 7 p.m. for a car crash. After seven minutes of running with emergency lights on, siren screaming and air horn blowing, we arrived upon the scene of a two-vehicle, head-on collision.

When a southbound car didn't make a turn and crossed the center divide, it hit a northbound vehicle. The northbound car was so smashed that we had to use the "Jaws of Life" to open up the car to pull out the body of the occupant. He was dead from multiple blunt force trauma to the head and torso. The car going south was also badly damaged. We pulled the seriously injured occupants out of that car. The passenger (the driver's girlfriend) had severe internal, blunt-force injuries. She died a few days later because of complications from the crash. The driver, who had a BAC of 0.22, had the least serious injuries and was released from the hospital after a two-month stay. To this day, he can't walk normally because of the injury to his spinal column, which had to be fixed by fusing it in two places.

Besides injuring himself and killing his girlfriend and the other driver, the drunk driver's actions affected several more people: six firefighters, four paramedics, and three state highway patrolmen.

If you think your crash won't affect other people, you are kidding yourself. Even though several years have passed, the memories of this wreck are just beginning to fade for me.

We haven't mentioned the driver's family and the families of those who died. I'm glad I wasn't the person who had to notify them. Can you imagine having a highway patrolman knock on your door on Christmas Day (or any other day, for that matter) to tell you a loved one has been killed? What a way to celebrate that Christmas and the ones to come that may not be so merry anymore. ■



The Scoop on Snow Shoveling



Illustration by Felicia Moreland 10/01

While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. The National Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

- Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful.
- If you have a history of heart trouble, **DO NOT** shovel without a doctor's permission.
- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace yourself. Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety.
- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back

than lifting the snow out of the way.

- Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth to one-half of a large one.
- Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- Dress warmly. Remember that extremities such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots. ■

(Permission to reprint granted by the National Safety Council, a membership organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health.)



Defend Yourself!

Courtesy, **Safety Times**

USAF Photo by Rebecca Wright

While we seek perfection in many things we do, the consequences of falling short are usually not significant. However, falling short of perfection in our driving habits can have grave consequences.

Your lifetime odds of being killed in an automobile accident are 1-in-100. Each year one of 16 drivers is involved in a reported motor vehicle crash according to the American Automobile Association (AAA). These figures should be enough to encourage you to drive and react defensively when you are on the roadways.

Here are some tips to make the routine use of your automobile less likely to end in an accident or disaster.

Expect The Unexpected

- Assume a “what if” posture. Know what you’ll do if a driver swerves or stops suddenly.
- Watch for drivers who are preoccupied or driving “offensively.” They count on you to react to them, instead of watching out for you.
- Stop lights and signs do not have the same fear factor they once had. People are running them with greater regularity. To protect yourself, don’t jump into the intersection the instant the light changes, or when you have the right of way.
- Search the roadway and off-road areas 20 to 30 seconds ahead for hazards that could effect you.
- Don’t play chicken. If someone seems determined to enter your lane, yield the right-of-way.
- Use caution approaching curves and the crest of hills.
- Rush hour is especially challenging. Be ready to brake at all times and expect drivers around you to stop or change lanes abruptly.
- If someone is signaling to turn, wait until they actually turn before pulling out into traffic.

Take The Initiative

- Try to make every trip a “perfect” trip.
- Always buckle up. Drivers who buckle up have a 45 percent better chance of surviving a crash and a 50 percent better chance of surviving without an injury.

- Stay alert. No eating, drinking, fiddling with the radio or engaging in distracting conversations.
- Pull off the road when using a cell phone.
- Avoid operating a vehicle if you are overly tired, drowsy from medications, ill, or extremely stressed or excited.
 - Signal lane and turn changes.
 - When you’re in the right lane of a multi-lane highway, help traffic merge smoothly by moving over a lane if traffic permits.
 - Slow down. Observe the legal speed limits. The faster you are moving, the longer it takes you to stop safely.
 - Proper maintenance can help you head off mechanical problems that could cause an accident. Check your vehicle’s owner’s manual and work with your mechanic to develop a periodic maintenance plan.

Create A Cushion

- Maintain a safe following distance by staying 2-5 seconds behind the car ahead. Increase your following distance as your speed increases. At higher speeds a 2-3 second gap will not give you enough time to take evasive action if an emergency occurs in front of you.
 - At 40 mph, stay 4 seconds behind; at 50 mph and faster, stay 5 seconds behind. Increase your distance at night, on rough roads and in bad weather.
 - If you can’t see your vehicle’s reflection in the rearview mirror of the vehicle next to you, you’re driving in its blind spot.
 - Tailgaters are a dangerous nuisance. Pull over and allow them to pass.
 - Be a loner. Avoid clumps of cars on the highway.
- Some people have no business on the road with you, but they are there anyway. Look for these warning signs of drivers impaired by drugs, alcohol, medication or fatigue: wandering from lane to lane; driving unusually slow or fast; running stoplights and signs; moving erratically or out of control; and driving with lights off at night.
 - Stay as far away from these drivers as you can. If possible, notify the police. ■

Don't Be an Easy Target for Carjackers



Reprinted Courtesy of the *National Safety Council*

Incidences of carjacking and other auto-related crimes have appeared regularly in news stories. Despite the danger, there are measures you can take to guard against crime when you are behind the wheel or walking to your vehicle. The National Safety Council suggests the following techniques to reduce the chances of becoming a carjacking victim.

Be Alert While Driving

Before leaving, plan a route to avoid dangerous areas. If you need to drive in unfamiliar areas, try not to drive alone. Always drive with your windows up and doors locked. Regularly check your mirrors and scan ahead for potentially dangerous situations.

Be conscious of escape routes while driving. Always leave room to maneuver out of the area when you come to a stop. Keep enough distance ahead so that you can see the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you touch the pavement.

Carjackers sometimes hit a car from behind and then pull a weapon when the victim gets out to investigate. If you think you have been bumped intentionally, don't leave your car. Motion to the other driver to follow you to the nearest police station. If confronted by a person with a weapon, give up your car.

If your vehicle breaks down, pull as far as possible away from moving traffic, tie a white handkerchief around the antenna, close the windows and lock the doors. If anyone approaches to offer assistance, open the window slightly and ask the person to call the police or a towing service. Ask uniformed personnel for identification.

Parking Your Vehicle

Use caution when you enter or leave a parking

lot. Park in well-lit areas where you can see and be seen by others. When getting in or out of your vehicle always be aware of what is going on around you.

When returning to your vehicle, approach with caution. Have your keys ready, glance underneath the vehicle and check the front and rear seats. If someone is loitering near your car, avoid them and walk to a place of safety such as a lighted store, house or other building. Call the police.

As in every situation, the foremost concern is your personal safety. If you are confronted by a carjacker, don't resist. Hand over your keys and step back from the assailant. Remember: a car can be replaced but your life cannot. ■

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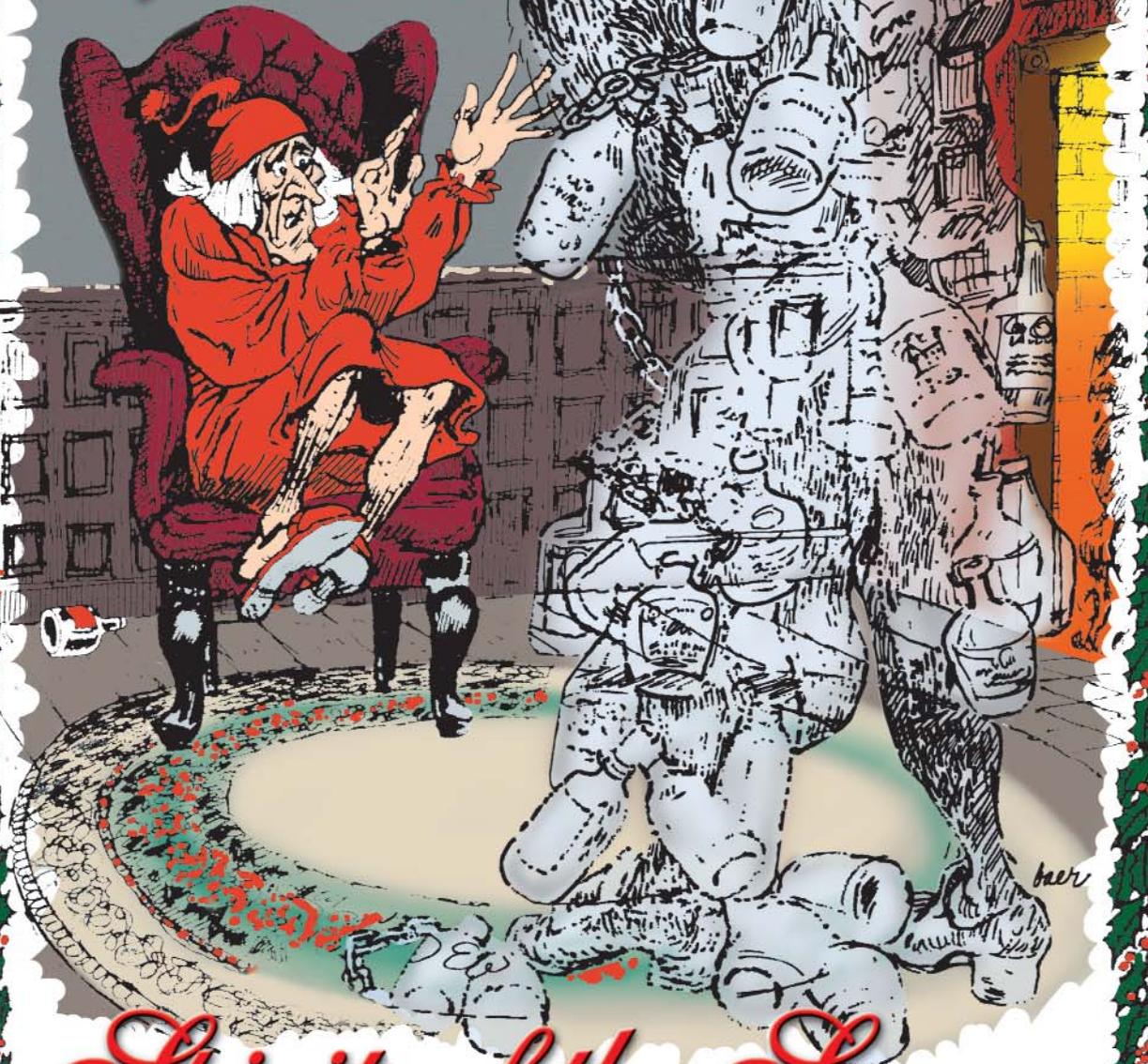
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*Beware, Scrooge,
I wear the chains
I forged in life.
Every bottle I
ever drank now
weighs on me!*



Spirits of the Season

*O*ld Marley was as dead as a mackerel, and Scrooge knew it. Yet, here before him was a transparent spectre that looked like and sounded just like his dead partner. And the ghost was chained to an assortment of empty bottles, glasses and aluminum cans.

Scrooge wondered if the nip of brandy he had taken before retiring — well, a dozen or so nips — was the cause of this hallucination, for he was sure it was that.

"Why have you come to visit me, Jacob?" cried Scrooge, barely able to control his voice. "And why are you bound?"

"I wear the chain I forged in life," said the Ghost. "The remnants of my misspent time in this world." He shook the chains and filled the room with the clanking and clattering of glass and metal. "I come to warn you. Ebenezer Scrooge; to save you from my own fate."

"**Your** fate?" said Scrooge. "But you died in a carriage accident while you were ... er, intoxicated. **I** never touch the stuff."

The Ghost shook his chains with greater fury. "Your own chain is already longer than the one I wear," said the Ghost.

Scrooge looked, but saw no chain attached to himself. "I have no idea what you are talking about," he said.

"Do you not remember what happened on your way home from our counting house this evening?" said the Ghost.

Scrooge did not, and said so. He recalled his workday, taking a few sips from a bottle of whiskey he kept in his desk — for medicinal purposes, of course — and then his stop at the pub after work. A pint or two (or was it three?) of ale to brace him against the cold. But after that, nothing.

"Tonight, you will be visited by Three Spirits," the Ghost continued. "Not the kind of 'spirits' you use," he added. "They will help you shun the path I tread."

With that, the Ghost floated out the window.

Scrooge must have lost consciousness for he awoke to the sound of a church clock chiming midnight. He sat up to see three Spirits standing at the foot of his bed. One was a child. The second was a huge, fat man in red with a flowing white beard. The third was a skeletal figure in a black robe, holding a scythe.

"Three at once?" asked a terrified Scrooge as he pulled the covers up to his throat.

"Yes," said the Child. "It would take us too long one at a time, what with you passing out and all." He

moved to the side of the bed. "I am the Spirit of Christmas Past — **your** past." Scrooge noticed he carried a glass of spirits in his hand, what appeared to be a rum and Coke.

The second Spirit introduced himself: "I am the Spirit of Christmas Present," he said, hoisting a can of stout to his lips. He gestured to the figure in black. "And this is the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come." The bony hand of this third Spirit held an empty gin bottle.

Scrooge tried to shrink under the covers, but the Child pulled him out. He waved his arm, and the four were standing in a London street. A horse-drawn carriage, occupied by two very intoxicated men, went by them at a terrible speed. It tried to make a corner and overturned. One man got up from the wreckage and stumbled away. Scrooge was horrified when he recognized that one as himself, and the other as his partner Marley — now lying dead.

"Not a very pretty picture, is it, Scrooge?" said the First Spirit. "You killed Marley, and you suffered the first of your 'lost weekends.'"

The Second Spirit raised his arms and the scene changed to another street and another time. A small carriage, driven madly by a drunken man, ran down a small child. Once again, he recognized himself at the reins, and saw the child was Tiny Tim, the son of his employee, Bob Cratchit. Now Scrooge vaguely remembered the event had taken place earlier that evening.

"You see?" said the Second Spirit. "You've crippled poor Tiny Tim.

He'll never walk again without a crutch."

"Please!" said Scrooge. "I've seen enough! Take me home!"

But the Third Spirit raised his arms and Scrooge closed his eyes to shut out the sight as the sleeves fell away from the dried bones. When he opened them again, he found himself in a graveyard facing a newly-planted headstone. On the granite was carved:

Ebenezer Scrooge He Died As He Lived

Scrooge screamed once and buried his face in his nightshirt. "Please tell me I may change these things by altering my life!" he implored the Spirits. "I shall strive to keep Christmas all the year — in a more fitting manner!"

Then he felt beneath him, not the cold ground, but his own bed. He looked around and saw his familiar room and belongings, and heard the clock as it finished striking one. He immediately went to the window and poured the dregs of a bottle of Chianti out onto the street ...

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*Whether today or
in the days of
Dickens, real holiday
cheer never comes
from a bottle, and
driving is always
for sober minds.*

Camping on a Three Dog Night



Legend has it that Eskimos described how cold a night was by the number of sled dogs they dragged into their igloos with them in order to stay warm. A one dog night was relatively mild, a two dog night was rather harsh. On a three dog night, you did everything possible to keep warm. Lacking sled dogs, three sailors on a camping trip went to the extreme to keep warm and almost paid for their actions with their lives.

I was relaxing at home after supper one Sunday evening when my pager went off — a signal that a recompression case was on the way, and it was time for me to get busy. I'm used to calls that tell me a diver has run into trouble. But the people who needed our services this time weren't divers — they were three campers.

The three sailors had pooled their cash and rented camping gear for a weekend trip to the mountains. Picking up their gear early Friday afternoon, the young adventurers hit the road. By 6 p.m., they had driven to the mountains and hiked three miles to their campsite. They set up camp and started supper. As night fell, dark rain clouds rolled in. With the long work week behind them and a meal and a few beers in them, they climbed into their sleeping bags and dozed off.

That night, the temperature dropped. A light, intermittent rain thoroughly soaked the camp. In the morning, the shipmates gathered around their charcoal grill for warmth. They spent most of Saturday trying (unsuccessfully) to dry out their belongings. The day remained overcast and cold, but they decided to tough it out, partly because of the cost of the rental gear.

Saturday night brought a bit less rain but more wind. During the night, one of the gents decided to fight off the cold by relighting the small charcoal grill and putting it inside the tent. He opened the tent's vent flaps for fresh air, then slid back into his sleeping bag. Sometime in the night, one of the three (the guy closest to the open flaps, no doubt) awoke, removed the still warm grill, closed all the flaps, and went back to sleep.

Several hours later, he awoke again — this time feeling dizzy and with a headache. He thought it was because of the altitude (3,500 feet) and decided breakfast was in order. The problem was he couldn't rouse one of his companions, and the

other one kept falling back to sleep. (Actually, he was passing out.) The sailor sensed something was wrong, and realized he had to get his friends to a doctor.

He dragged the other two out of the tent. After an hour, when the one who had been passing out could stay awake, the two of them carried their unconscious friend to the truck. Then, the next problem reared its ugly head: The one sailor who was awake had slept on the way to the mountains and didn't know his way back to civilization.

With only occasional intelligent input from his passengers — one who kept falling back asleep and one who was barely conscious — it took more than two hours to get to the main highway, and another hour-and-a-half to get to a naval hospital.

By the time they arrived at the hospital, the driver was exhausted. The conscious passenger was less drifty but had a pounding headache. The third man was vomiting and seriously confused. The crew in the emergency room noticed a bright-red color on their cheeks and under their fingernails, along with other symptoms of carbon-monoxide poisoning. They put the sailors on 100 percent oxygen.

After treating them for more than an hour, doctors decided hyperbaric-oxygen treatment was necessary. The ER staff alerted our recompression-chamber supervisor. That's when our "chamber-crew" pagers went off. All three campers recovered after our treatment.

Never use cooking gear or appliances as heaters, and don't use combustion-type heaters in enclosed spaces — this includes gas lanterns. These things produce deadly gases, such as carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. As these sailors found out, they would have been better off to get a few sled dogs. ■

Spirits of the Season...continued from page 13

Scrooge was right about there being a more fitting way to celebrate the holidays. But many people do overindulge, and they often pay the price. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that alcohol is a factor in nearly 40 percent of all fatal crashes. During 1999, 15,786 people died in alcohol-related crashes — an average of one fatality every 33 minutes. Also, NHTSA found approximately 308,000 people were injured in alcohol-related crashes during 1999 — an average of one person injured every two minutes. ■



Courtesy, *Rubber Manufacturers Association*

Winter driving conditions can be quite dangerous, which means if you need to be outside you should prepare yourself and your vehicle wisely. Remember that in winter weather, stopping is often the hardest part. Since it's the tires that do the stopping, make sure you take proper care of them. They are a critical part of the three-member team — your car, your tires, and you — that can get you safely through the winter if you follow the rules.

First, think about your tires. Are they rated as all-season tires? That means they have a tread designed to give you better traction in the wet and snow. If not, a double dose of caution is called for. You might think about investing in winter tires (formerly called dedicated snow tires) if you live in a snowy area. Remember, it is important to see your tire dealer for proper installation of winter tires on your vehicle.

Are they properly inflated? The answer may well be “no,” because as the temperature outside drops, the air inside a tire contracts and the pressure drops — one or two pounds for every 10-degree drop. Contrary to common belief, underinflation does not give the tires better traction in the snow, it only

makes them more vulnerable to damage. Winter or summer, your tire's worst enemy is underinflation. So, make sure you check your tires when the weather turns cold and bring them up to the correct pressure.

Second, remember that no matter what kind of vehicle you drive, you still are driving on only four tires, just like everyone else. Four-wheel drive may help you go better in the snow, but it won't help you stop better or keep you from skidding. Don't let your four-by-four make you overconfident!

Third, let your tires do the job they were designed for. They can keep you out of trouble if you use them correctly:

- Avoid sudden movements by accelerating gently, turning gradually and going easy on the brakes when stopping. These driving techniques will help the tread on your tires maintain good traction. Spinning or sliding tires means your vehicle is out of control.

- If you do go into a skid and your car has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brakes and turn in the direction of the skid. Don't pump the brakes.

- If you get stuck in the snow, spinning your tires too fast can overheat them to the point where they will explode and cause an injury. Rocking your vehicle gently back and forth is the correct way to get out of a problem. ■



Black Ice and Vehicles Don't Mix!

BOB ROWLEY
OC-ALC Ground Safety
Tinker AFB Okla.

It was cold and cloudy and there was a foot of snow on the ground the day after Christmas as dawn broke on the bluffs overlooking Table Rock Lake near Branson, Mo. My wife, Sofia, and I were visiting her aunt for the Christmas holidays. Christmas night my wife suddenly decided she had to go back to our home in Oklahoma City the next day, so we packed for our return trip. Her aunt and I tried to talk her into staying until the snow had melted. However, she was homesick and insisted, so we left Table Rock at daylight in our four-wheel drive 1995 Ford Explorer. Due to the condition of the roads, I started out in four-wheel drive and stayed there. (Note: I had already had new tires put on the Explorer at my own expense as soon as I heard about their Firestone tire problems.)

The Missouri highway department had done an excellent job of removing the snow, so we had no trouble on our drive through Branson and Springfield to Interstate 44. However, when we entered Oklahoma and began driving on the Will Rogers Turnpike, things changed. The highway department was still in the process of trying to clear the highway of snow, and things went from bad to worse in a hurry. I was traveling approximately 45 mph in light to moderate traffic when I hit a patch of black ice and lost control of the vehicle. I tried to drive out of the skid using the engine's power and carefully steering, but to no avail. The Explorer

spun 1 -1/2 times, then headed for the center barrier. I tried to correct and had almost pulled the vehicle out of the skid when it hit a patch of snow and started to roll. The Explorer rolled several times, then landed on its passenger side.

My wife and I had been wearing our seat belts and shoulder harnesses. We had only bruises and a few cuts on our heads and shoulders from where our Christmas presents hit us as the vehicle rolled. The Explorer's roof had crushed down to the top of the head restraints on both front seats. Luckily, my wife and I are both short, so the roof didn't hit us. Several drivers stopped and helped my wife and I get out of the vehicle. My wife had already released her seat belt, but I was hanging sideways in mine, so for me to get out, the seat belt had to be cut. One Good Samaritan stopped and called the highway patrol and an ambulance. His wife then helped Sofia into their vehicle and out of the cold weather.

When the ambulance arrived, the medics checked us over and then we stayed at the scene until a wrecker arrived and righted the vehicle. We both rode with the wrecker driver to a Ford dealership, about 15 miles west in Miami, Okla. We rented a motel room, then left for home the next day.

This accident reinforced a couple of important lessons when driving. First, always wear your seat belt and shoulder harness. Also, avoid wearing your shoulder harness behind your back — as some people do — because it does absolutely no good in that position. Second, make sure any items inside your vehicle are secured so that they can't become projectiles during an accident. And look out for black ice! ■

When You Replace Your Windshield



BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

USAF Photos by Dennis Carlson

I had just gotten onto Interstate 25 going south out of Albuquerque when a compact pickup cut me off in my lane. I'd barely caught my breath from what had been a close call when something that sounded like a bullet hit the right side of my windshield. I looked and saw a large chip in the glass and a crack perhaps seven inches long that went to the windshield's right edge.

As soon as I got home I covered the crack with scotch tape to keep out dirt and moisture. At least the crack wasn't directly in my line of sight, so it wouldn't be too annoying after I got it fixed. Showing the damage to a neighbor, he just shook his head and said, "You can't fix that — you're going to need a new windshield." It turned out that he was right. My insurance agent took one look the next morning and suggested that I replace the

windshield. However, getting the job done right was more than just cosmetics — it was also a safety issue. A safety issue that could become very important if I was ever involved in a rollover accident.

"Your windshield is an integral part of the vehicle," said Carl Gampper, owner of Express Auto Glass in Albuquerque, N.M. He explained that the windshield helps support the roof. "If you were in a rollover collision, you wouldn't want the roof to crush down. So, it's important that you have all of the strength the vehicle was designed to have."

And keeping the roof from caving in isn't the only concern. Windshields also play a key role in making sure that passenger side airbags perform properly. Gampper explained that the windshield serves as a backstop for the airbag, keeping it in place in front of the passenger. Were the windshield to pop out during an accident, the airbag would move upward — providing little, if any, protection.

While original factory-installed windshields have a good record for staying in place during a colli-

sion, the same can't always be said for replacement windshields. Improperly installed replacement windshields have been known to pop out, not only affecting the performance of the passenger's airbag, but also weakening the vehicle's roof to the point it caved in. As a result, some occupants have suffered severe neck and spinal cord injuries. The fault, Gampper believes, lies in the shoddy workmanship of some windshield repairers.

He stated, "We've pulled out windshields that have been replaced in the past and they were barely hanging in there. It's amazing to see some of them. You can almost push them out without using your knife to cut the windshield out (of the sealant)."

How the sealant is applied is particularly important to getting a strong bond, according to Gampper. He pointed out that some installers cut corners by not removing all of the old windshield sealant, choosing instead to put a bead of new sealant on top of the old. By gluing the windshield to the old sealant rather than to the car's metal, they increase the likelihood the windshield will pop out during an accident.

Doing the job right takes more time and can have its own problems, according to Gampper. He explained that in the process of cutting away the old sealant the repairmen sometimes nick the metal where the windshield sets into the vehicle. When that happens, the installers use a special primer to touch up the spot so the glue will adhere to the vehicle. Also, the edges of the windshield must be kept free of any residues — even oil from the installer's fingers — if the bond is to be as strong as possible. To prevent contamination, the installers wear special gloves and use suction cups to hold the windshield during the installation process.

As careful as the process must be, it can be done out-of-doors for customers who can't get to a windshield repair shop, Gampper said. Whether done indoors or outdoors, a windshield can normally be replaced in an hour. If proper sealants are used, it typically only takes an hour for the sealant to effectively bond the new windshield in place. Still, as a precaution, Gampper warns customers to wait for 24 hours before washing their vehicles. "We don't want the high pressure of the car wash blowing moldings loose."

Because installing a replacement windshield properly is important for safety reasons, it's important to locate a reputable repair shop. Gampper suggested people look for an established business, one with physical facilities. "Check them out. Ask how long they've been in business — that's a good starting point. If they've been around awhile, they've obviously been doing a good job. If you are going through your insurance company, you can ask your agent. They've had a lot of experiences, both good and bad, and they can probably get you



Properly applying the windshield adhesive is essential to getting a good seal. Poorly applied adhesive can allow the windshield to pop out during a collision.



Wearing gloves while working around the edges of a windshield prevents oils from the repairman's fingers from getting on the glass and weakening the seal.

on the right track."

However, there are windshield repairers to beware of, according to Gampper.

"Be leery of telemarketing companies," he said. He explained these companies typically operate out of an office in a city with guys working out of the back of a van or pickup. "I've seen some pretty shoddy installations done by some of those guys."

And then there are those "roadside repairers" — people who park a pickup truck on the side of the road and put up a windshield repair sign. Gampper warned that these people rarely carry insurance. If they damage your vehicle while installing the windshield, you're just out of luck. Nor, he said, can you trust them to provide you with a worthwhile warranty. He explained, "There is nobody out there to really police them and enforce those issues." ■

Cannon's Crack-Up Road



BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Crisscrossed with more miles of unpaved road surface than any other state, New Mexico is a place where you get used to driving on dirt and gravel. Sport utility vehicles (SUVs), pickups and even passenger sedans bounce along countless miles of wind-rutted roads every day in the Land of Enchantment. For some folks, it's a necessity. For others, it's a shortcut around speed limits and blood alcohol tests. Curry County Road 11 is just such a shortcut. But it's a costly shortcut — one that has exacted a heavy toll on the airmen at Cannon AFB.

"In the past year we've had four major accidents out here, one resulting in a fatality," said Patrick Spoor, chief of ground safety for Cannon's 27th Fighter Wing. Those four accidents put four airmen in the hospital and killed the fifth. That fatality, which occurred in August 2000, stands out vividly in the mind of Spoor's ground safety superintendent, MSgt Howard Earl. There were so many wrong choices made.

He explained, "There were three of them in the vehicle and a young lady was driving. They went out one evening to a local club for a night out. She was *supposed* to be the designated driver."

Despite being responsible not to drink that night, she ignored that and drank anyway. Although she hid her drinking from her passengers, she may have been worried about encountering a blood alcohol checkpoint on State Highway 60, the main route linking Cannon and the town of Clovis. As a result, she drove to the end of 21st Street in Clovis, then turned onto Curry County Road 11 and sped down the dirt road

"She hit a 22-inch-deep dip in the road and rolled the vehicle," Earl explained. She compounded her problems by not wearing her seat belt, so when the vehicle rolled she was thrown through the windshield. Fortunately, her passengers had worn their seatbelts and one was able to walk away from the wreck to seek help at a local farmhouse. But it was too late for the driver — she died at the accident scene. Her drinking and speeding only added to the problems inherent on a road designed for farmers traveling to their fields, not high-speed traffic.

Describing Curry County Road 11 Spoor said, "It's an unimproved road. It has a dirt surface and it's poorly maintained. The county says they 'doze it once a month — but during the summer months, it's whenever they get to it."

Although the road is paved where it begins in Clovis, the asphalt ends west of town where the road provides access to local farm fields. New



Dips in the road, even though periodically filled in by county maintenance, soon begin to erode as rains wash away the fill dirt. The erosion can be severe, creating dips deep enough to send a speeding vehicle out of control.

Mexico's monsoons, typical of late summer and early fall, turn the road's surface into a quagmire. Passing vehicles leave deep ruts in the mud, which harden into tire-grabbing grooves when the mud dries. And then there is a narrow, 22-inch-deep dip. Although the dip is filled in when the county grades the road, rain soon washes away the loosely packed dirt. The remaining culvert can send even the most rugged four-wheel drive vehicle flying out of control if the driver is going too fast — which Spoor said, they often are.

After so many mishaps, the dangers of driving Curry County Road 11 has become part of the base's newcomer's briefings. Some airmen listen, but others still choose to roll the dice, using the dirt road as a high-speed highway.

Spoor explained, "People go too fast for the circumstances. The speed limit is 55, but you'd be surprised how many people just come flying down the road. You can see the cloud of dust coming for miles."

They take those chances, Earl believes, out of an "it won't happen to me" attitude.

continued on next page



Just west of town, Curry County Road 11 transitions from an asphalt surface to a dirt road. It's on the dirt section of the road that many airmen get into trouble.

"A lot of people have the mindset that they're 'bullet-proof' — that they can roar down the road and 'it' — an accident — won't happen to them." But, he added, if you drive dangerously long enough, "it" will happen to you.

And there is another flaw in many peoples' thinking. Impressed with the ruggedness and go-anywhere nature of SUVs or four-wheel-drive pickups,

Earl explained that many people believe they can ignore safety.

The fatality involved an SUV, while the most recent accident — which happened in June — involved a crew cab four-wheel-drive pickup. "People think because of the size of the vehicle and the fact it sits high off the road, it is more durable," Earl said.

That is an assumption that has been recently disproved, notably by the National Highway Traffic Administration, which conducted tests on the stability of SUVs. Those tests proved that despite their greater weight and stiffer suspensions, "Higher vehicles tend to roll a lot easier than lower vehicles," Earl said. Still, it was misunderstanding the handling characteristics of these vehicles that led to the base's most recent accident on the road.

The accident, Spoor explained, involved four airmen who borrowed a four-wheel-drive pickup to drive to Clovis for lunch. On the way back the driver stopped and put the truck into four-wheel-drive as they hit the dirt section of the road. Telling her passengers, "trust me," she accelerated to 65 mph — 10 mph above the speed limit — while ignoring passenger's pleas that she slow down. Moments later the truck veered to the left then back to the right as she over-corrected

and crashed the truck into a dirt wall. The truck rolled several times, but at least all of the occupants were wearing their seat belts. Still, one of the passengers suffered a broken neck, an injury which, while it did not result in a paralyzing injury, put him on quarters for a month.

As serious as the problems have been on Curry County Road 11, it would be a mistake to think they

are unique to that road. Around the country both on and off base, airmen drive on dirt roads to reach recreation areas, as part of their duty, or in some cases, to reach their homes. One of the most important things drivers can do to be safe on these roads, Earl said, is to "Stay UNDER the speed limit." He explained that washboard surfaces can have a vehicle's tires literally hopping down the road, spending much of their time in the air where they provide no traction or control.

There can also be unexpected obstructions. Depending on the area, hay bales, trash, cast-off furniture, or other objects may be left lying in the road. Also many things are found on rural roads that city-raised drivers may not be used to.

Spoor said, "One of the big things we have problems with on these country roads are farm implements. A lot of these don't have lights on them." He explained that because of that, and the fact farmers aren't expecting fast-moving automobile traffic on farm roads, "You can't depend on them to give you

a stop or turn signal."

Finally, there is another danger that many drivers fail to consider. Like paved roads, dirt roads often have intersections — but with one MAJOR difference. While "Stop" or "Yield" signs control many intersections on regular roads, don't count on seeing those on dirt roads. With visibility at these intersections often limited by tall weeds, crops or trees, a driver can be surprised by traffic suddenly entering the road from the side. Just how bad can that be? In one case, Spoor said, a pickup owned by a friend was hit by an 18-wheeler hauling cattle. Dirt roads, he believes, are definitely a place where it pays drivers to beware.

"People who drive on dirt roads need to use personal risk management," he said. "Start looking at the situation. Ask yourself, 'What is the condition of the road? What is the weather like? Is there the potential for farm equipment out there?' Take a look at all of these conditions before deciding to drive down one of these roads." ■



Curry County road maintenance personnel periodically grade the dirt road in an attempt to keep the surface drivable. However, frequent heavy rains and high winds during the summer and fall can cause heavy erosion, leaving a rutted, washboarded surface that can send a fast-moving vehicle out of control.

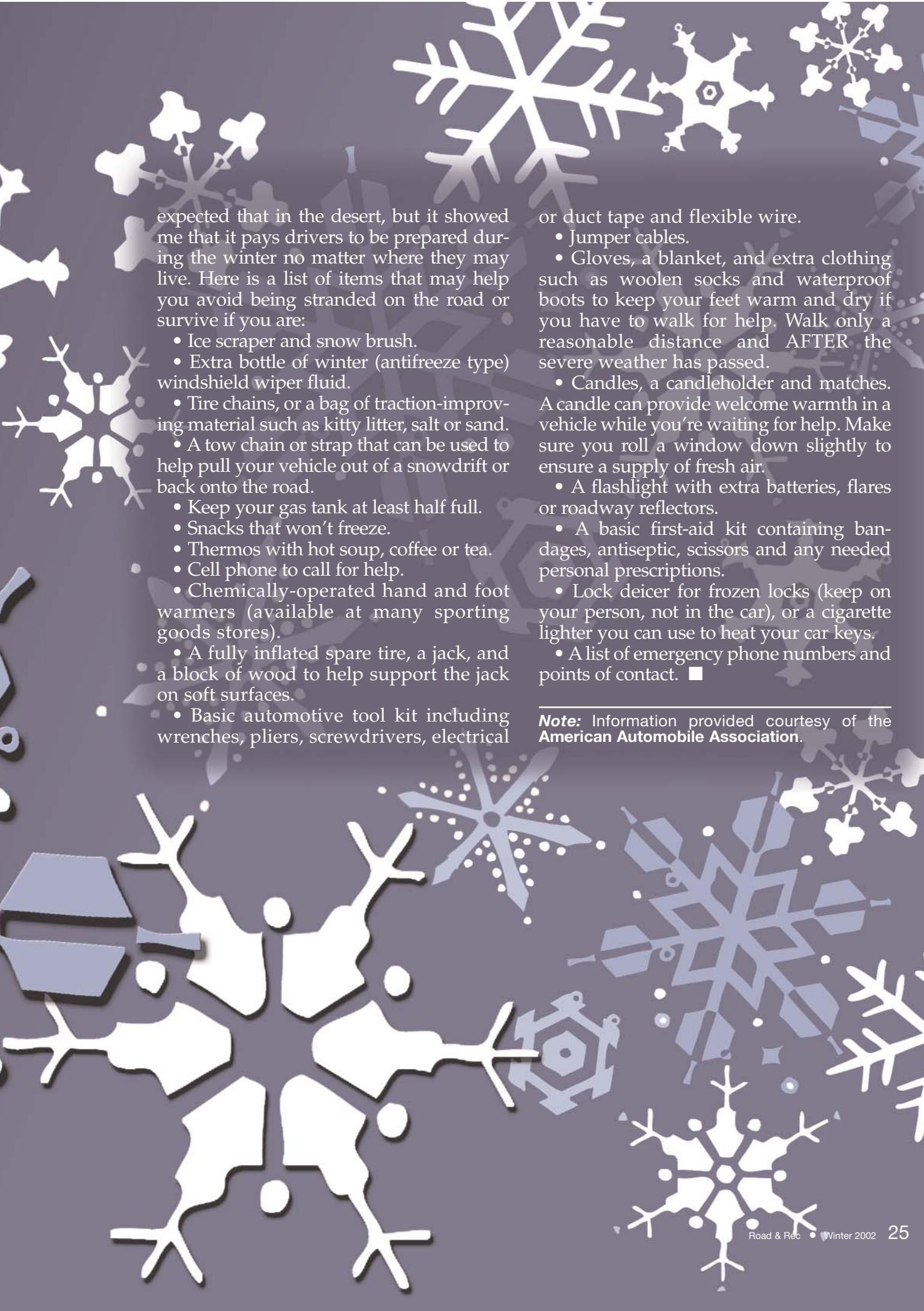


Automobile Winter Survival Kit

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

My first winter in Missouri was a real eye-opener. Having been raised in southern California, I had never seen anything like the blizzards common to the Midwest. I was shocked when the winter lows in Kansas City plunged to -28 degrees F. During news broadcasts the police warned drivers to keep blankets, thermoses with hot fluids, candles and other "survival items" in their cars in the event they were stranded in the weather. I had never before thought of having to survive a frigid winter storm in my vehicle. But the truth was, smart people prepared themselves just in case.

While I never got stuck in a winter storm in Missouri, I nearly spent a night in my pickup when a winter storm covered many New Mexico roads with snow. I hadn't



expected that in the desert, but it showed me that it pays drivers to be prepared during the winter no matter where they may live. Here is a list of items that may help you avoid being stranded on the road or survive if you are:

- Ice scraper and snow brush.
- Extra bottle of winter (antifreeze type) windshield wiper fluid.
- Tire chains, or a bag of traction-improving material such as kitty litter, salt or sand.
- A tow chain or strap that can be used to help pull your vehicle out of a snowdrift or back onto the road.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Snacks that won't freeze.
- Thermos with hot soup, coffee or tea.
- Cell phone to call for help.
- Chemically-operated hand and foot warmers (available at many sporting goods stores).
- A fully inflated spare tire, a jack, and a block of wood to help support the jack on soft surfaces.
- Basic automotive tool kit including wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers, electrical

or duct tape and flexible wire.

- Jumper cables.
- Gloves, a blanket, and extra clothing such as woolen socks and waterproof boots to keep your feet warm and dry if you have to walk for help. Walk only a reasonable distance and **AFTER** the severe weather has passed.
- Candles, a candleholder and matches. A candle can provide welcome warmth in a vehicle while you're waiting for help. Make sure you roll a window down slightly to ensure a supply of fresh air.
- A flashlight with extra batteries, flares or roadway reflectors.
- A basic first-aid kit containing bandages, antiseptic, scissors and any needed personal prescriptions.
- Lock deicer for frozen locks (keep on your person, not in the car), or a cigarette lighter you can use to heat your car keys.
- A list of emergency phone numbers and points of contact. ■

Note: Information provided courtesy of the **American Automobile Association.**

How Not to Learn to Ski!



Courtesy, **Safetyline**, Dec 1995-Feb 1996

Planning a first-time ski trip this winter? Want to garner attention and sympathy while wearing a cast on your leg propped on a footstool in front of a roaring fire? Here are some sure-fire ways to make your first ski trip a disaster.

Don't take any lessons. Anyone can learn to ski. You don't need to learn how to fall so you don't hurt yourself or know how to get back up. Just get out there and "wing it." As long as you've got all your rental equipment and look good in your ski outfit, you're going to do just fine. Just watch your friends and do exactly what they do.

Pick a day when the snow has a nice slick, icy finish. This kind of snow is called "corn snow" because the surface looks like kernels on a giant ear of corn. Even though it gives about as much cushion as asphalt, you'll be very impressive skiing on it because you can go very fast. Don't, under any circumstances, ski after a new snowfall, when the snow is softest and will cushion your fall. Slushy snow is also good to ski on, because you can really dig your skis into it to stop suddenly. Of course, the skies are the only things that will stop.

Pick the most advanced slope you can find. If you're going to get hurt, make it worth the ski patrol's time. Besides, it's embarrassing to tell how you got hurt on the bunny slope when you can impress people with how you got hurt falling 100 feet down the roughest trail on the slopes.

Make sure you drink plenty of alcohol. This way, you can be limber when you trip over your skis going down even the simplest trail. Plus, the booze will give you courage to try a slope that you would never try if you were sober.

Keep an eye on other skiers, especially the one

that is 20 feet behind you and wearing the latest fashions. If you do this, you won't be distracted by obstructions that pop up in front of you such as trees, boulders, drop offs, or other skiers.

Pick a trail that is narrow and is lined with lots of trees. The trees are good for breaking your fall or stopping you on your downhill run, especially since you don't know how to use your skis to stop. If you can't find a trail full of obstacles, make your own. Just veer off in any direction.

Pause to refresh yourself in the middle of a run just below the ridge of a slope. This puts you in the position of meeting other skiers who pop over the ridge. They can demonstrate how to run over dead-wood skiers like yourself. You may also pick up some new, colorful language.

Use ski lifts like the swings they really are. Don't bother to lower the restraining bar. Also, swing your legs back and forth as hard as you can. If you're really good at this, you can execute a double flip off the lift.

Let your buddies talk you into making a jump on your first time out. If they say it's easy, you can believe them — especially if all of you have had a few pre-slope warm-up drinks. If you decide to do this, make sure someone has a camcorder, so you can audition for the opening scene of *Wide World of Sports*.

If you follow this advice, you will end up (sooner or later) in a prone position on the slopes. If you think that moving will aggravate your injury, don't stay put and don't send someone for the ski patrol. Make your way back to the lodge on your own. This way, you can take full advantage of your health insurance. If you're mobile, go to the first-aid station and get ice and advice. The ice is swell for cooling your after-ski drink. The advice, you can just ignore. After all, you've read all you need to know. ■

Fractured Follies

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Shades of Christine!

Remember Steven King's evil automobile — the one with a will of its own? Well, maybe it's NOT just fiction. Or, at least that might be what went through the mind of one airman who suddenly found himself UNDERNEATH a seemingly un-piloted and un-powered automobile.

Back during the "Dog Days" of August, a couple of airmen decided to tow a non-operating car on a trailer to an off-base residence. Arriving at the off-base location, they unhooked the 1996 Ford Mustang they used as a tow vehicle, parking the Mustang in the garage. Although he didn't set the parking brake, the driver left the Mustang in first gear to make sure it didn't roll down the driveway.

That done, our airmen rolled the other vehicle off the trailer, parking it to the left of the driveway. Seems reasonable to put it there. After all, leaving it in the driveway would have meant the Mustang couldn't get out of the garage — or could it?

Our airmen returned to the trailer — which was still sitting in the driveway — to police-up the ramps and tiedown straps. Meanwhile — a few feet up the driveway — mysterious forces were at work. Was there a slight flicker in the headlights as the "beast" came alive? Did the front wheels turn ever so slightly as the Mustang eyed its prey? Perhaps a slight, subtle "clunk" as the shifter slipped out of first gear?

We will never know. But silently the "beast" crept from its lair in the garage, approaching its unsuspecting victim, his back turned to the impending danger.

"Who KNOWS what evil lurks in the minds of machines?" — perhaps went through whatever diabolical force was now guiding the fearsome Ford. Within moments, it rolled over its victim, crushing him beneath its considerable weight.

Witnessing the dastardly attack, the second airman rapidly enlisted the help of two neighbors and rescued his friend from underneath the Mustang. Shortly thereafter, an ambulance arrived and transported our injured airman to a nearby hospital where he was found to have a

ruptured spleen, a partially collapsed lung, a bruised liver, an injured kidney and six broken ribs.

Now that's gotta hurt! Indeed, our airman's injuries were bad enough that he spent four days in the hospital and 21 days on quarters. And, truth is, despite all of our fanciful musings the real culprit was not some maniacal Mustang on the warpath against humanity. Instead, it was simple human error. You see it's not for nothing that they call that thing underneath the dash or beside the driver's seat a "parking brake." Maybe the name is a hint for how it's supposed to be used?

What's Cookin'?

It's a simple, well-known fact that a meal tastes better when a person is sitting in his/her favorite reclining chair. After all, there's nothing quite like dribbling hamburger juice on your shirt while watching your favorite baseball team face a three-and-two count with the bases loaded.

Even better is when you can assume a semi-horizontal dining position while juggling a real meal — something like a bowl of steaming-hot ravioli. It takes a real "artiste" to keep everything in balance during such a delicate moment.

Unfortunately, the airman in our story was not quite an "artiste." His "fourth point of contact" — as my first sergeant used to call it — had barely settled on the cushion when gravity — nasty thing that it is — intervened. Sliding off the dish, our diner's bowl of ravioli — did I mention that it was steaming-hot? — turned-turtle in his lap, dumping its contents.

"Yeeow!" — or perhaps something even more descriptive — filled the house as our ravioli-roasted diner launched from his chair with enough velocity to achieve low orbit. Upon re-entry and proper medical treatment, the prognosis was for survival. However, he had some painful — make that VERY painful — injuries.

And the moral of this story? Gravity has a way of taking whatever that falls from your plate — including steaming-hot food — on the shortest path to the ground. In such moments, it's probably wise not to have your lap in the way. Indeed, in such moments, it's probably wise NOT to be sitting in a recliner! ■



MSGT BRYAN PUTTONEN
HQ AFSC/SEGO

We measure our mishap prevention progress each year by tallying our losses, and fiscal year 2001 was not a banner year. Our on-duty performance has been exceptional, but our off-duty losses continue a gradual upward trend. Our greatest off-duty effort, the 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign, was successful at putting the brakes on what was potentially a runaway year for fatal mishaps.

The fatal losses divided by rank closely parallels our actual rank populations. This is a significant change from previous years where our younger airmen dominated our loss numbers. Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) comprised 26 of the 59 fatalities — or 44 percent, while NCOs are 41 percent of our workforce.

The most hazardous thing we

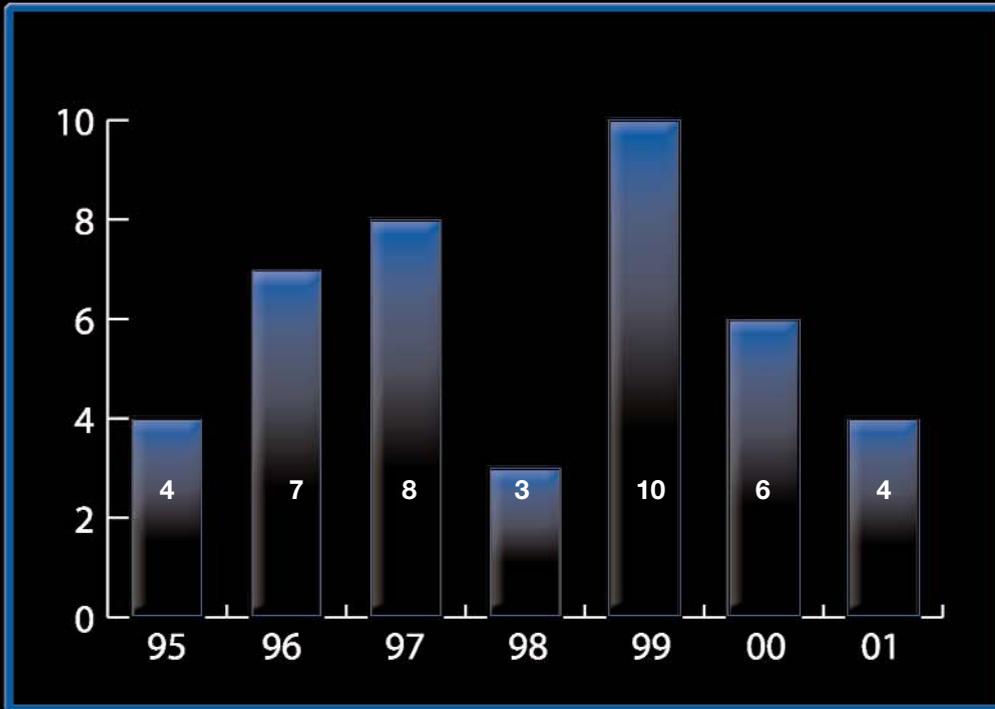
all do is drive an automobile or ride in one as a passenger. Passengers sometimes do not recognize the appropriate time to say "knock it off" to a driver who is operating a vehicle with little regard for personal safety. One in five people who died in POVs were passengers. Seven of those 10 lost their lives because the operator was taking unnecessary risks. Over half of the traffic deaths were in single-vehicle crashes which resulted solely from the vehicle operator's actions.

To sum up traffic deaths in the Air Force, here are several points to ponder:

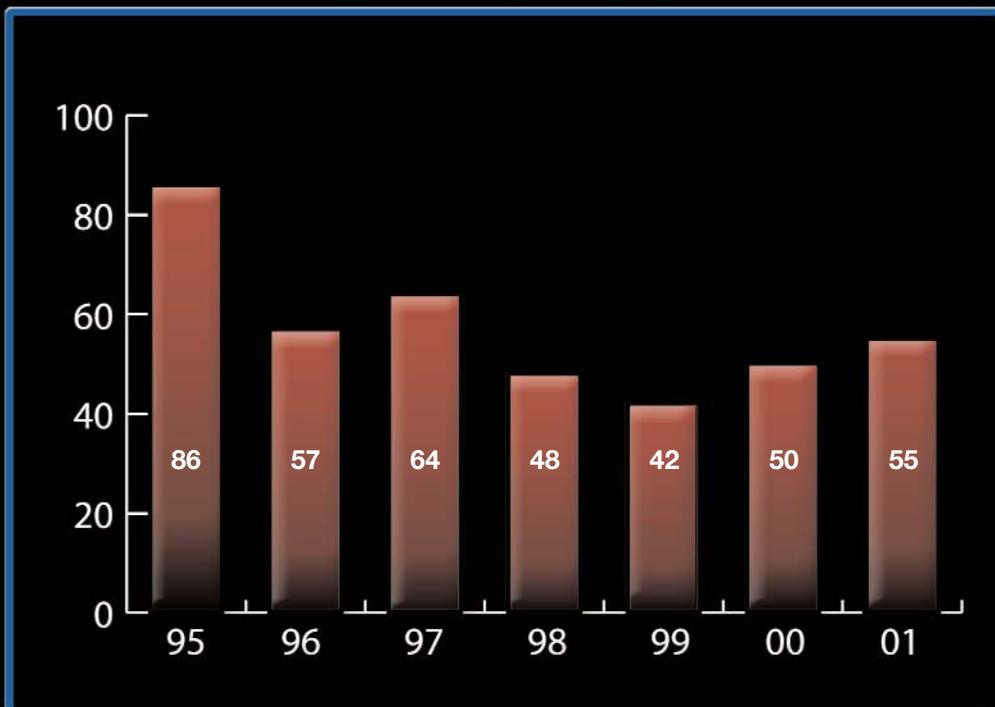
- Young airmen are no longer the only target group when considering traffic mishap prevention.
- Preventing single-vehicle crashes should be as strongly emphasized as preventing multi-vehicle crashes — mishaps often caused when drivers fall asleep at the wheel, exceed the limits of the road, speed, or fail to pay attention while driving.
- Passengers must be willing to speak up to influence the driver

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On-Duty Fatal



Off-Duty Fatal

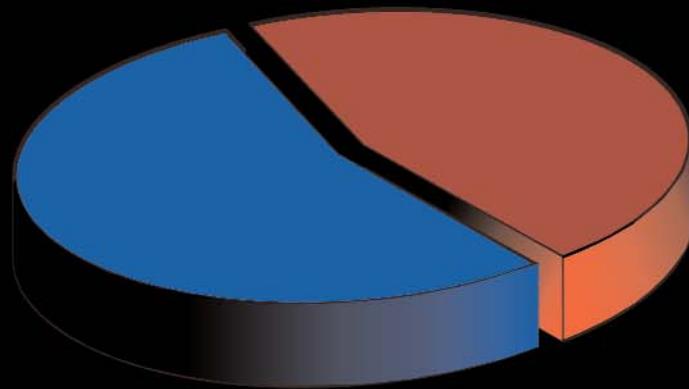


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Fatalities by Rank

2 - Airman Basic	11 - Staff Sergeants	1 - Cadet
1 - Airman	8 - Technical Sergeants	1 - Second Lieutenant
20 - Airman First Class	7 - Master Sergeants	2 - Captains
6 - Senior Airman		

Private Motor Vehicle Deaths



■ Single Vehicle - 54%

■ Multiple Vehicles - 46%

when the driver is taking unacceptable risks.

- Alcohol use was involved in 25 percent of all Air Force traffic fatalities, so the battle against drunk driving must remain active and visible.

- Non-belted Air Force drivers were four times more likely to die in a serious motor vehicle crash than operators who wore their seat belts.

- Nine Air Force members died during the year in motorcycle mishaps.

One had been drinking, five were speeding, and one was not wearing a helmet. One rider was

killed towing a large unstable non-motorcycle-type trailer. One rider died while passing unsafely and two others died as the result of the actions of other motorists. The most significant factor in seven of the nine mishaps was the motorcycle operator's unsafe actions. Our motorcycle mishaps are one-third of what they were before we began giving hands-on motorcycle training during the late 1980s. We continue to provide motorcycle training to our military personnel, but have been unable to reduce the annual number of fatalities during

the last 10 years.

One area where we have had success is in sports and recreation. This year we had four recreational deaths — the lowest number ever in the Air Force. The previous year we had 14 recreational-related deaths, of which nine were water related. This year's fatalities involved an ATV crash, a snow skier who struck a tree, a waterskier who was struck by a boat propeller, and a rock climber who fell.

This year the Air Force had a total of 2,800 ground safety mishaps that cost more than \$10,000 or resulted in at least one lost workday. That works out to approximately one serious mishap for every 208 individuals. Ten years ago that rate was one mishap for every 117 individuals. We have made great strides in reducing our on-duty mishaps within the Air Force.

This year we had four on-duty ground fatalities — our second best year ever in the Air Force,

following 1995 where we had three fatalities. This year's deaths involved a government vehicle crash, a heart failure during a fitness evaluation, an electrocution and a drowning.

The most significant factor in all our losses was, undeniably, the lack of sound risk management before and during the tasks being done. Regardless of whether we are riding a bicycle, loading an aircraft or maintaining our physical fitness, the common factors in mishaps are bad risk decisions and complacent behavior. Just as it is important to make sound decisions, it is important to remain alert and not become complacent or distracted.

We need all of our personnel to be injury free because each mishap hurts our capability to accomplish our missions. To fly, fight, and win demands a workforce dedicated to preventing needless on-duty and off-duty losses. ■

Off-Duty Motorcycle Fatalities

Fatality Rate per 100K Personnel





MAINTAINING SAFETY AWARENESS IN OUR CHALLENGING AND EVOLVING OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Our mission at the Air Force Safety Center is to establish and execute mishap prevention programs to enhance Air Force mission capability. It is our sincere hope that our philosophy pervades the Air Force in the days to come.

The mission is paramount—the trick is to do it as safely as possible. We truly believe people are the Air Force's most valuable resource and that a single death or injury—on or off duty—is one too many. Air Force weapon systems are more costly and harder to come by than ever. We can ill afford loss or damage that impacts our combat capability.

The temptation during times of increased tension, tempo and operations is to take shortcuts, ignore the rules and just get the job done. "We're in a fight now and we can ignore the rules." Wrong! We always say we should train like we fight; let's not throw out the rules and safety programs we live with every day. Continue the mishap prevention program we have in place.

Use operational risk management. Minimize our risks and potential losses to preserve resources and fight another day. We can't afford another Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, where we lost 14 aircraft, 28 people killed, and 105 wounded due to an explosive mishap or a Doha, Kuwait, where the Army suffered more losses in one explosive mishap than their total combat losses. In Desert Storm, flightline safety issues were encountered at Prince Sultan. In other places such as Tusla and Tirana, safety issues were encountered at the outset of operations there.

We have seen non-combat losses and injuries at the beginnings of operations, and even one is too many. We work hard every day across the Air Force to have an effective mishap prevention program, to preserve lives and resources. Whatever the challenges are, now is the time to pay attention to the safety programs, mishap prevention plans and risk management initiatives we have put into practice.

Our mission here in the Education and Media Division at the Air Force Safety Center is to assure effective mishap prevention programs Air Force-wide. We do this through effective education and training and publication of world-class safety and mishap prevention magazines. Our ultimate goal at Road & Rec magazine is to enhance the preservation of combat capability.

Thanks for your help!

MARK K. ROLAND
Chief, Education and Media Division
Editor-in-Chief