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Road & Rec

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Summer 2007



- **Stuck In The Fog**
- **Urbo Arm Guards**
- **Two Bad Options**
- **Geocaching**

Road & Rec

Volume 19, Number 3 Summer 2007

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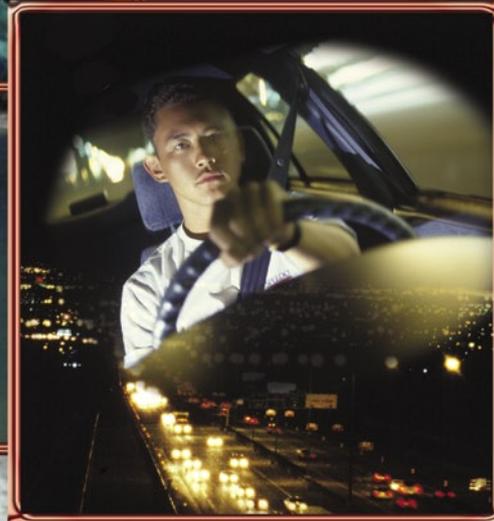
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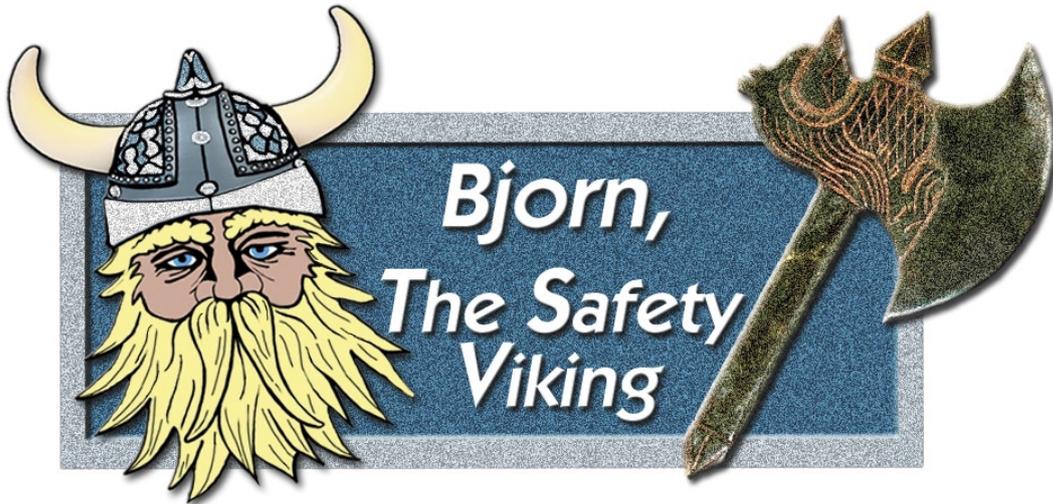
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Why Are You Wasting Time Reading The Title?

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Kirkuk AB Iraq

Welcome to this! It is with gusto that I begin the summer rant, stoically paddling forward in my quarterly attempts to bestow safety wisdom upon the feverishly eager masses! So we enter into this together, hand in gauntleted hand, as we cross one dangerous street after another in search of the sacred place where all things enjoyable are also safe. We're never going to find that place; sadly, most things in life that are fun include a measure of risk. The best we can hope for is to narrow that margin by a fraction and perhaps prevent a few mishaps or horrible dismemberments. Let's begin, shall we?

The sun, as we all know, is a huge massive burning ball of explosions that is responsible for sustaining life on earth. "Big responsibility it is," said Yoda, trying hard not to look like a Muppet. It is understandable, then, that occasionally the sun tries to kill you out of spite, which is why you should try

hard to stave off the burning tendrils of angry sunlight by slathering up a good coating of sunscreen whenever you're planning to spend any time under the cloudless skies. Swimming seems to cool your body down, and while many of us spend more time worrying about an eternity of playing backgammon with Davy Jones, we also need to notice how the water is helping the sun slowly cook the meat off our bones. Those are just some things to keep in mind.

One of many dangerous elements remains constant throughout the four seasonal periods: Road trips. At this point, the ice has been replaced by pedestrians, who complain a lot more than the ice does when you run them over. This may well be a reason why studded tires are not allowed in the summer months. Speeding is a fast way to Jackson Pollock yourself all over an ironically placed NASCAR billboard. Wearing a seat belt helps a lot. It also helps to pay due respect to Sir Isaac Newton's laws while driving. His laws work despite the posted speed limits.

For those hikers who choose to avoid the roads, nature also has a knack for chewing on us. Sometimes it might seem like fun throwing sticks at a wee

A Snorkel Full of Tar

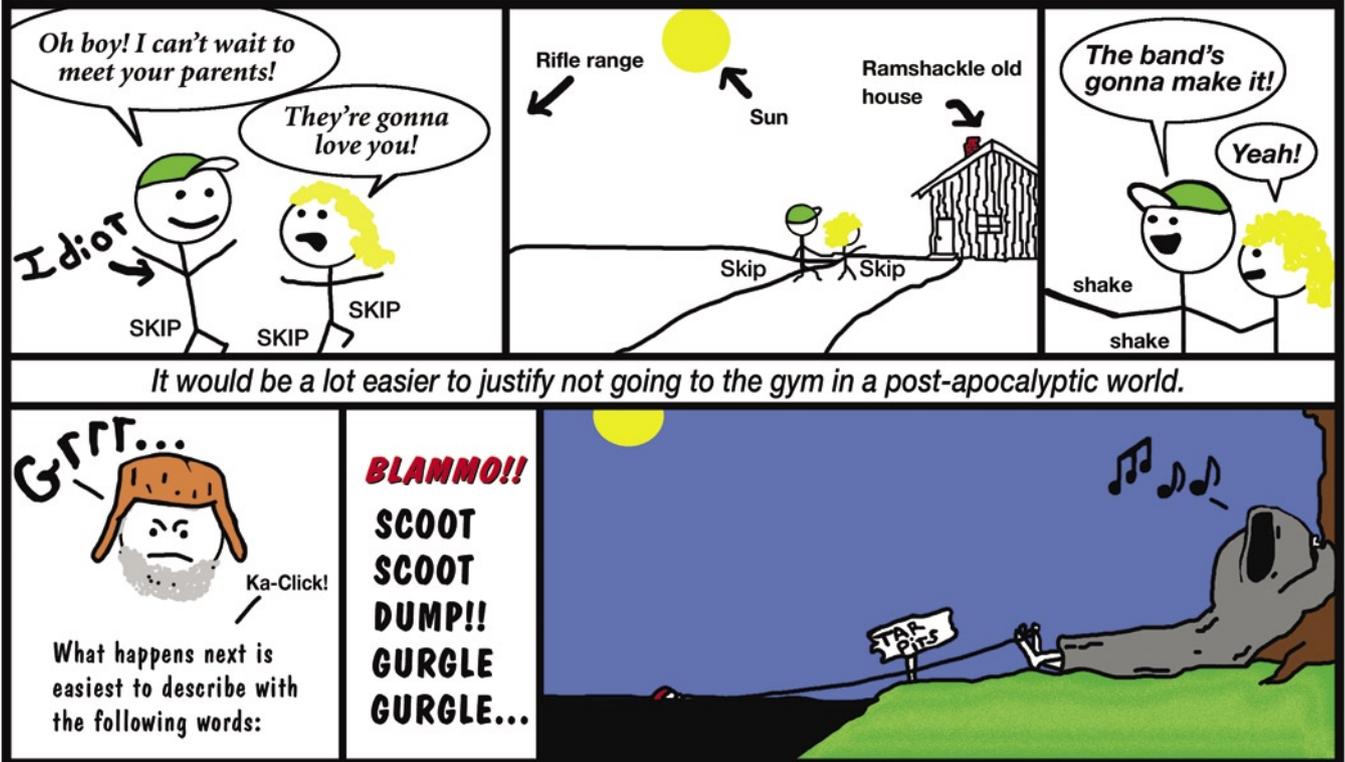


Illustration by Zachary Wakefield

moose, until big momma tramples you into fertilizer in seconds, just for being nearby. If the bear you spotted isn't wearing a conical hat and riding a unicycle, leave it alone. Actually, you should probably leave it alone anyway; if there's one thing worse than being eaten by a bear, it's being eaten by a unicycle-riding bear in a conical hat. That's not just painful, it's embarrassing! Bug repellent will keep the ticks and gnats away, and might even deter larger animals from taking more than one bite, so feel free to go nuts with the spray anywhere you suspect the biters might find nibbling opportunity.

A bit of arbitrary wisdom before I run out of room: Unless you are an obsessed archaeologist, perhaps you should re-evaluate the wisdom of meeting your new fling's parents for the first time at their cozy cottage next to the rifle range, near the tar pits. It is always in your best interest to follow the last bit of all-encompassing advice:

Don't do dumb things!!

Sincerely,

*Bjorn, your Friendly Neighborhood Safety Viking
Frightener of small harmless things
Baron of the North Sea
Raiser of friendly toast(s)*

“Urbo Guards” And Why We Have Them



MSGT JEFFREY C. URBANSKI

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It was a day like any other in the Isochronal Inspection Dock. I was a staff sergeant turbo propulsion specialist (“engine god”) and found myself at the tail end of a No. 4 major ISO, a bit behind, facing a turbine change and a last-minute propeller change. Our hangar was being renovated and we’d been working out of the fuel cell hangar for several weeks. We were two maintainers short, and the Dock Chief was screaming for an ETIC – just another day in ISO.

As a Wing Chief, I was responsible for the care and feeding of six Airmen, as well as the health and wellness of Ramstein’s C-130 fleet. I was conducting a typical 7-level follow-up inspection just before a Quality Assurance Quality Verification Inspection, in an effort to score another victory in the eternal struggle between maintenance and QA, expertly balanc-

ing speed of production with quality of output. Flashlight in hand, I was scanning the inboard side of No. 1 engine and sidestepping my way toward the rear of the powerplant. I noticed that the maintenance stand seemed a bit higher than usual. “Bonus!” I thought. “Now I can get a better look inside the upper cowling.”

“What was that?” I asked myself, as my flashstick wandered over the fuel filter. “Is that a backward safety wire?!” (As the Marine Drill Instructor in the movie “Full Metal Jacket” said, “Is that a jelly donut, Private Pyle?!”)

I took one more step to my left to get a better peek at the possibly backward safety wire, daydreaming about chewing out one of the 3-levels for forgetting the “lefty-loosey, righty-tighty” law, when my foot found nothing but air to support my weight. As most maintainers know, an engine guy is heavier than air. With my maintenance stand jacked about nine inches higher than usual (remember the “bonus?”), there was a mild drop to the adjacent plat-

form. I put my arms out to brace myself for the stumble, and my left forearm struck the clamshell door that had been left open to inspect the turbine area. Pain shot up my arm as I instinctively retracted it and sucked air in through my teeth. "That's definitely broken," I said.

But when I turned my left forearm over to inspect the damage, a large chunk of twitching, severed muscle greeted me. Blood poured all over the maintenance stand. My skin had split open about 2 inches and ran lengthwise down my forearm another 6. A cold wave swept over me, signaling the instant onset of shock. I grabbed the nearest cloth-like material I could find for a bandage, which, in hindsight, probably shouldn't have been the oily rags from the drip pan under the engine. I turned to look at the only two people nearby – an Airman working near the intake and my Section Chief – cursed loudly, and said, "I need to go the hospital."

My Section Chief freaked and helped me walk down the stairs. One of the fuel cell guys threw us his truck keys (thanks, fuel cell dude!) and we sped over to the Ramstein

clinic. By the time we arrived, less than a quarter-mile away, my BDU shirt had a puddle of blood in it, which promptly spilled over the cab of the truck as I exited toward the emergency entrance (sorry, fuel cell dude). One look from the docs at Family Practice and I was loaded into an ambulance for transport to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

To make a long story short, after Anatomy 101 in the ER with every medical 3-level in the joint poking and prodding at the guts of my arm, a cold rinse on bare nerves to get out the oil and paint chips, and the arrival of my pale-faced and nearly hyperventilating wife, the Army docs put seven whole stitches in "to allow for bleeding and avoid infection," he said. (Thanks for the train tracks, Dr. Frankenstein). Then they doped me up, and sent me home for three days.

When I finally returned to work, I got to take a good look at the clamshell door that bit me. As anybody who has ever worked a C-130 knows, those clamshell doors don't ever fit quite right. Most times, if the adjustment is

continued on next page





ever so small, the crew chief will go out and file off just enough to get them to fit. This clamshell had been filed to a razor's edge. The dark spot where my arm had slid around each side of the metal started at about a quarter-inch deep and tapered out nearly 13 inches lower into a nearly 2-inch-deep stain. I was lucky I didn't sever a tendon or major blood vessel.

I also got to see the newly installed rubber "Urbo Guards" that had been mandated because of my actions. I'd always been told that "stupid" rules were there for a reason, and that that reason was usually because someone had screwed it up in the past. A little situational awareness could have prevented me from being that guy who screwed it up and forced all of ISO to install those "stupid" guards for each successive ISO.

I had a lot of time, sitting around the ISO Dock, watching everyone else pick up my slack and pondering the "Urbo Guards," to reflect on how this had happened. What I came up with at the end of said sitting-on-my-butt time was not surprising. I had heard it repeatedly in countless safety briefings.

Various factors went into causing my mishap. Everything from a new environment in the fuel cell, to allowing myself to feel rushed by external forces, to a basic lack of situational awareness, contributed to the sweet scar I'll have for the rest of my life, but the main contributor was the

human factor. If I had questioned why I was sitting nine inches higher than usual while doing my inspection, this mishap could have been prevented. If I had told QA and the Dock Chief that quality takes time, and not rushed or pushed production, it could have been prevented. If I had simply paid attention to what was going on around me, it could have been prevented. I was distracted and hurried, and that's no way to perform safe maintenance.

It's been nearly five years. Right after the accident, I couldn't move my smallest two fingers for three weeks, couldn't pick up a wrench for four weeks, and couldn't play guitar for almost 12. (I still can't play like I used to. I guess those dreams of being the next Angus Young are finally dead, making my wife ecstatic.)

In retrospect, I was fortunate. I ended up with a few days off, a few weeks of embarrassment, and one cool-looking scar. But it could've been much worse.

They say smart people not only learn from their mistakes, but also the mistakes of others. Before troubleshooting, fixing, or inspecting an aircraft, or undertaking any other activity for that matter, use my mistake to your advantage. Before you start, install your "Urbo Guards."

Look around, don't rush, maintain situational awareness, and ensure you're performing safe maintenance every time. ■





Stuck In The Fog— A Day On The Ocean

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The sky was clear and the winds were calm—I knew it would be an excellent day for boating in the Gulf of Mexico.

My wife and I were back home in Florida on leave, and I never pass up an opportunity to head out on the water for some fishing and diving with my dad and brother. By noon, all the gear was on the boat and we were departing for the open ocean.

Over the years, my brother and I had collected notebooks of coordinates leading to area fishing reefs and diving locations. We skimmed the books and quickly found a favorite location about two miles out. The water was as smooth as glass, so the trek through the Intracoastal Waterway and

out into the ocean to our chosen spot was extremely fast.

Before I knew it, my brother and I had our dive gear assembled and on, and we were heading for the bottom. My dad, the non-diver of the bunch, sat with fishing pole and beer in hand on the deck, waiting for our return.

As I hit the bottom, I quickly realized I was having trouble maintaining good buoyancy. I looked at my right shoulder and saw that the air I was putting in my buoyancy compensator was escaping through a hole in the inflation valve. Examining the hole only made it larger, and I was forced to head up and back to the boat.

I went straight to the surface and saw that I was about 50 yards from the boat. With almost no positive buoyancy from my BC and 15 pounds of dive weights wrapped

continued on next page

around my waist, I began the swim back to the boat. I quickly grew tired from the added weight, but knew that if I released and dropped my weight belt to the ocean floor, my day of diving would be over. With my head barely above water and my legs kicking feverously to keep me afloat, I made my way back to the boat. Luckily, I had a spare valve onboard, and was able to fix my gear.

After almost an hour, my brother and I finally headed back down for our first dive. This was quickly followed by a second and a third dive, with only short necessary breaks between them. Just before our third dive, I remember my dad saying that there were some clouds on the horizon, and that we should hurry it up.

As we surfaced from the last dive, it was obvious that we were now pushing our luck with the weather. We quickly got onboard and disassembled our gear. The weather rolling in wasn't rain or severe thunderstorms, but a thick layer of fog that severely limited our visibility.

Although we had a long-distance radio navigation system and a satellite navigation system, what we didn't have was the coordinates to the entrance of the channel. With no ability to navigate back to the entrance of the Intracoastal Waterway, we did the only thing we could think of: all lights on, 090 on the compass and full throttles. My brother drove for about the first 20 minutes and then handed it off to me, so he could look for a chart that he thought was onboard. Because there are no references on the water, it was difficult to tell how thick the fog was, and I just assumed that I would see the shoreline approaching. I remember seeing an increase in crab traps, something that normally occurs as you get closer to shore.

Finally, through the fog, I saw what I thought was an approaching buoy. I quickly mentioned this to my distracted brother and began to slow down. That was when it hit me! The buoy I was looking at was not a buoy at all; it was a person strolling on the beach. I quickly slammed the throttles to idle and went hard left on the wheel. Anyone who has ever driven a fishing boat knows they don't turn quickly and they definitely don't stop on a dime. By the time I got

turned parallel with the shore and stopped, we were in less than four feet of water.

I consider myself a fairly smart guy who generally applies good common sense, but to this day, I still think about the potential consequences of running that boat aground at full speed. There was no excuse for what we had almost done, other than stupidity.

It was now clear to all of us onboard that this fog was extremely thick, and that even with land in sight, we were going to have a difficult time finding our way back to the dock. We slowly made our way south, following the shoreline; hoping to find the entrance into the channel. It was getting late and the sun was almost below the horizon.

I tried several times to contact a marine agency that could patch me through to my wife, but for reasons still unknown, I was unable to get hold of anyone on the radio.

After traveling a significant way down the beach, we finally recognized a local hotel and realized we were traveling in the wrong direction. We reversed our course and eventually found the entrance into the Intracoastal Waterway. The sun had set and we were using a high-power spotlight to find the channel markers. We continued to navigate this way for about a mile, when our luck ran out and we were no longer able to pick out the markers in the thick fog. The boat ended up outside the channel, in very shallow water. We raised the two outboard engines so the props wouldn't hit the bottom, and slowly started to drift.

We had floated about 75 feet when, just off the bow, we saw a large red pirate ship. This ship is a local tourist highlight, which involves a cruise along the coastline and a lot of alcohol. Despite traveling those waters every day, that commercial boat had also drifted out of the channel and ended up in shallow water. We threw out our bumpers and managed to position the boat abeam the pirate ship. We figured this would be a fairly safe and entertaining place to wait out the fog.

It was about then that I finally got hold of someone on the radio and was able to call my wife. My wife had already contacted the Coast Guard to find out if any small boats were having problems. Of course, to the first



question they asked, “Where did they go?” she could only answer with “Somewhere in the Gulf.” Not an answer the Coast Guard usually likes to hear.

With our family contacted and our boat in a safe place, we waited out the fog for several hours. It was about 11 p.m. when we finally made our way through the Intracoastal Waterway and back to the dock.

Although in the end, everything was fine, and in some regards it was comical, the potential was there for us to get into real trouble. We hadn’t anticipated all these little problems adding up to such chaos. Over the years I’ve read many checklists on how to be safe on the water. In this case, I had ignored them all.

Here’s a quick reminder of the points you need to consider.

1. Plan ahead! A good plan starts long before you unhook the line from the dock. We should have decided on a destination, and left this information with our family. Also, a look at the weather would have told us the potential for fog
2. Check your emergency gear. Although we had turned on the radio and it seemed to be working fine, we never ops checked it. Many marine agencies would have been glad to give us a radio check. This quick action would have eliminated a great deal of frustration for us on the boat, as well as for our distraught families waiting at home. Also, we had an emergency kit on board with the usual assortment of gear: first-aid kit, flares, etc., but none of us onboard took the time to open it and check the condition of the equipment. Luckily, we didn’t need any of the gear.
3. Don’t push it when it comes to weather. We had plenty of time to pull up anchor and head to shore, but we couldn’t resist the opportunity of getting one more dive accomplished. We hadn’t thought about the possibility of blinding fog being associated with the clouds we saw.
4. Buy a chart of the local area. Although we had many maps and diagrams of the coastline onboard, we didn’t have a chart. Something with detailed depictions of the coastline, distances, and most importantly, latitude and longitude.
5. Examine your personal gear. The delays caused by my broken BC shifted our entire timeline. We would have been well on our way home had we got our first dive in when we wanted. Besides, getting out on the ocean only to find that your gear is inoperable can make for a lousy day.
6. Finally, if you are going to get stuck in the fog, make sure you know the location of the nearest pirate ship, and make sure you have plenty of beer to pass the time. None for the driver, of course. ■

was high, and that we needed to head in before it got too late.

Geocaching: A Fun & Growing Hobby



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Geo-caching involves searching outdoors for items that others have purposely placed. To find the cache, participants use a Global Positioning System receiver loaded with appropriate geographic coordinates.

A geocache, or *cache*, exists as a pair of latitude and longitude coordinates on the <http://www.geocaching.com> Web site. These waypoints guide searchers to the cache container, which may be as large as a metal ammo box, or

as small as a film container. Whoever finds the cache signs the logbook in the cache as proof of the visit. At the next opportunity, the finder also logs the cache at the Web site.

Finders may exchange items in the container. I've seen mini flashlights, toy cars, key chains, smiley magnets, rubber dinosaurs, casino chips, dollar bills, spare GPS receiver batteries, plastic bugs, and other non-edible items. The "treasure hunt" element makes geocaching a great activity for families with young children. This hobby is wonderful for families, couples, singles, and even Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. There are even Geocaching clubs.

Geocaching started in May 2000, when a man placed a container outside Portland, Ore., and posted its coordinates on the Internet for others to find. Today, there are tens of thousands of active caches in countries all over the globe. Each week, thousands of geocachers make new log entries. If you live in an urban area, there's a good chance that a geocache is within 5 miles of your home.

Geocaches are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 by their terrain and difficulty. Geocaches in public parks that require less than a mile of walking are typically rated 1 or 2. Geocaches that require long hikes up treacherous terrain are usually rated 4 or 5. Similarly, caches that are easy to find are rated 1 or 2 for difficulty, while caches that involve solving puzzles or looking for unusual containers are often rated 3 or higher. A 1/1 cache is perfect for the whole family, while a 3/3 cache or greater is intended for fit adults only.

Sometimes a geocache is nothing more than a



Photos provided by author



spot with a bit of interesting history or an exceptionally beautiful view. These virtual caches do not have a physical container, so you're usually directed to note some detail about the surroundings and report that to the cache owner by e-mail before logging your visit.

An event cache provides an opportunity to meet other geocachers and talk about your experiences. You can search for all types of geocaches and download waypoints from the Web site to your GPS receiver.

I enjoy planning the hunt, traveling to the location, and searching for the cache. In some cases, this could involve a long hike, which is great exercise and an opportunity to get away from everyday life.

Safety and Helpful Hints

You can enjoy geocaching for years. However, like any activity, there are perils that can quickly turn adventure into tragedy. Please follow these guidelines before starting on any excursion.

Know your limitations and those of your group. Someone who hasn't hiked in years shouldn't tackle a high-difficulty cache. Certain areas can be very demanding, especially in temperature extremes.

Pack smartly. Carry more than your GPS into the field with you. Minimally, you should always carry a two-way radio or cell phone, bottled water, a magnetic compass, and extra batteries. If your trip will take you more than a mile away from your vehicle, take a backpack with essentials.

Don't be too reliant on technology. Even though the GPS tells you exactly where you are, batteries

only last a few hours, and electronic gadgets can break. Learn to use a compass and always carry a paper map if you're hiking in an unfamiliar area.

It's always a good idea to have a partner on these expeditions. If you're going out by yourself, tell someone where you're going. City parks can be just as dangerous as the mountains, for different reasons.

Be willing to say "no." Geocaches are placed by real people who sometimes make mistakes in judgment. If you find yourself in an area that you aren't comfortable being in, tell yourself "no." There are lots of geocaches to find; you don't need to put yourself in danger to find every one. Don't be afraid to accept that a 3/3 or 4/4 may be too tough.

Always keep an eye on the weather. Sunny days can become thunderstorms, and dry creeks can flood within an hour. Some hot, humid summer days reach a heat index above 100 degrees.

From experience, I can tell you this is an extremely important safety tip: Waypoint your vehicle if you're going more than 300 feet. The last thing you need when you're on your third tough cache of the day, and totally exhausted, is not being able to find your way back to your vehicle after going 1 1/2 miles into the woods.

Put your four-wheel drive into 4X4 mode before you need it.

When driving off-road, using your headlights makes you much more visible to bikers, runners, horses and hikers.

Hydrate! Water is a must, especially if you haven't established a waypoint for your vehicle. Although caching is fun at night, don't do it alone.

Caching requires energy, so eat well before you go.

Know your physical limitations. Sometimes you just have to say, "I don't think so."

A fifth of a mile from the trailhead or parking area can turn into an hour's walk. Give yourself enough time, and check that terrain rating. A 3 terrain can give you a workout you'll not soon forget!

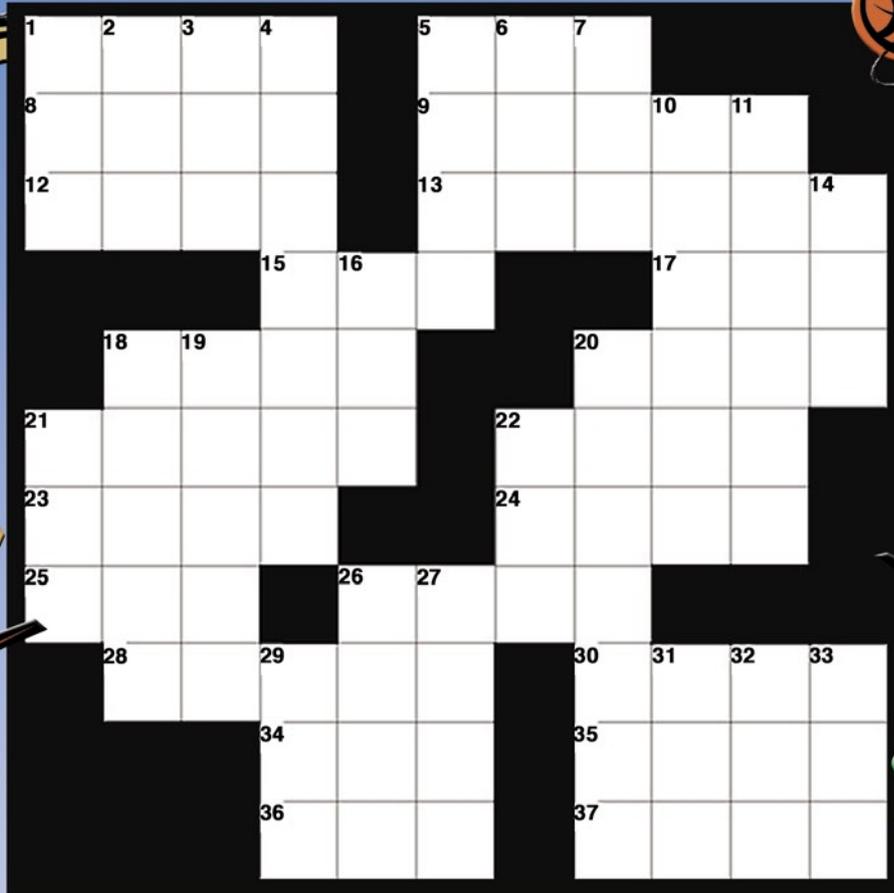
Wearing blaze orange in the woods during hunting season could save your life.

If you take children with you, you're responsible for their safety. Make sure they drink water and are properly outfitted. They take smaller steps than adults do, so they must take more steps. Keep this in mind, especially on those long 3/3s. ■

Exercising

CAPT TONY WICKMAN

71 FTW/PA
Vance AFB OK



ACROSS

1. Decays
5. Fancy vase
8. Squadron or flight
9. Nurtures
12. Close by
13. Factor in good workout
15. Greek letter
17. Tell-Tale Heart author
18. Low female singer's voice
20. Element of perspiration
21. Girl in Wonderland
22. Part of church architecture
23. Feeling of sickness
24. Flecks
25. Dupe
26. Danger when exercising out side
28. Critical need while exercising
30. Exam
34. Hearing organ
35. Great lake
36. South African golfer Ernie
37. What is needed after exercise

DOWN

1. Outside physical activity
2. Single
3. Actress Carrere
4. Good for muscles after exercise
5. Major or Minor
6. Actor Stephen
7. USAF command level acronym
10. Fueling body for exercise
11. Wraps
14. Still
16. Foot part
18. Permit
19. Climbing vine
20. Weightlifting partner
21. Network home to Lost
22. Oklahoma town
26. What muscles must do after strenuous exercise
27. Mistakes
29. Golf prop
31. Before, poetically
32. Bro's sib
33. Vietnamese holiday

AF Partners With NHTSA For Summer Driving Safety



SMSGT DOUG CROSBIE
AFSC/SEGT

As part of the "101 Critical Days of Summer" safety campaign, the Air Force Safety Center recommends that all bases integrate their participation in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's **CLICK IT OR TICKET** and **OVER THE LIMIT/UNDER ARREST** campaigns into their summer safety promotions. These programs feature extra law enforcement patrols on- and off-base, targeting the entire driving population of the United States. NHTSA will sponsor a supporting nationwide summer advertising campaign.

"I am very excited about working with the Air Force on this year's safety campaigns," said John Moffat, Regional Administrator for the NHTSA Pacific Northwest Region, based in Seattle.

"Military personnel are in the key age group – 18-34 – that is most often killed in traffic crashes," he said.

In 2007, the Air Force will conduct a service-wide drive to raise seat belt use and eliminate

drunken driving on-base, as well as to encourage off-base seat belt use and sober driving. Expect to see USAF Security Forces supporting local and state police forces in this campaign. If you aren't wearing your seat belt on every trip, start doing so now.

Traffic accidents continue to be the leading cause of premature death for people in the armed forces, and for all Americans. Military members are many times more likely to die or be seriously hurt in a car wreck than in combat.

Drunk driving is a factor in nearly half of all fatal traffic crashes. Control of this deadly crime is a top national priority. NHTSA and the Air Force share a common view on this offense – **OVER THE LIMIT/UNDER ARREST!**

Nationwide, seat belt use is at 81 percent. However, almost half of those killed in traffic crashes aren't using them. Simply put, they die because they aren't buckled up.

The **CLICK IT OR TICKET** campaign will begin the week before Memorial Day. Enforcement will continue through the summer, leading up to the **OVER THE LIMIT/UNDER ARREST** campaign around the Labor Day holiday. ■

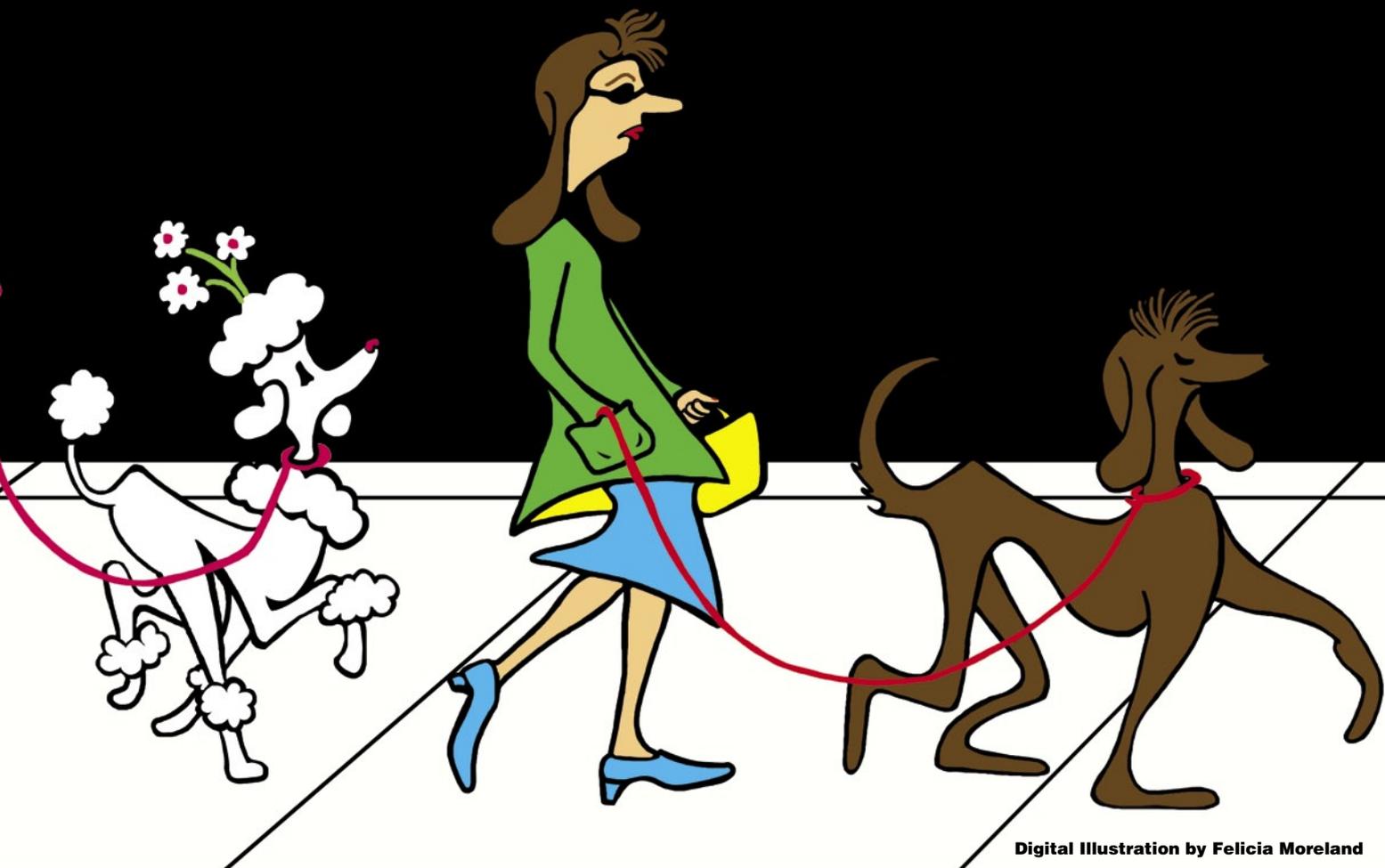


**You Might Be A
If You Wear A Custom-**





Safety Professional ... Tailored Bubble Wrap Suit



Tired, Driving To Vegas



Everyone in the Air Force remembers sitting through pre-departure briefs before major holidays and leave periods. Why do we have the safety briefs? Why are they targeted for the youngest active-duty members? Why are they required before taking leave? Why do these briefings always cover the hazards of long-distance driving? I used to have those very same questions, until I almost became another statistic. Another young, foolish military member who tries to drive too far, at night, alone, after a long duty day.

It was finally the end of another spring semester. I was excited to have successfully finished my junior year at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. I had survived a week of six final exams, ranging in subjects from Aeronautical Engineering to Philosophy. Most people consider this to be one of the most difficult and stressful weeks in any college career. It was no different at USAFA. This week was filled with late nights studying, and exams that lasted as long as four hours each, trying to recall an entire semester of facts.

I was especially excited about finishing finals that year, because as soon as I was done, I was heading to California on a five-week TDY. I finished my last final Friday afternoon; however, I still needed to clean out my dorm room for the summer. Everything in the room either needed to go into storage or into my car to go with me to California. Things took much longer than expected, and by the time the car was fully packed, it was around 9:30 p.m.

The logical decision would have been to stay at the Academy one more night, get a good night's sleep, and leave early in the morning. However, as is the case in lots of mishaps, there were some external factors pushing me to "go now." It was Friday evening and I need-

ed to be at Edwards AFB, Calif., by Sunday night, to start work Monday morning. I had determined that my route would take me right through Las Vegas, Nev. My master plan had me arriving Saturday in Vegas, and spending as much time there as possible before making the rest of the drive. I figured I could drive a couple hundred miles that night. Besides, I wasn't tired; I'd been doing fine on four or five hours of sleep all week, and the adrenaline was still keeping me going.

I started the drive in the dark up I-25 to Denver to get on I-70 west. The first hour was fine. There was a fair amount of traffic, which helped keep me alert. About an hour and a half later, I was deep into the mountains, and the traffic started to thin out considerably. It also became much darker, because I was far from any cities, and there were no

street lights and very little ambient lighting. About that time, the long week of finals was starting to catch up with me. I tried the usual methods of trying to stay awake—rolling the windows down and turning up the music. I don't know if this helped at all, but soon I started to feel my eyelids get heavy. I don't remember exactly how many times, but I remember opening my eyes after what I thought was just a second, but I really couldn't be sure. At this point, I knew I couldn't drive much far-

ther. Unfortunately, this part of I-70 through the mountains is fairly deserted, with many miles between what are usually very small towns. It was about 15 miles to the next small town. I probably should have pulled over right there and just taken a short nap in my car. All I could think about was getting to a hotel for a good night's sleep, so I pressed on down the road.

I honestly can't remember much of the next few miles, except for one vivid memory. A rumbling and then a squeal from the tires that

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“Things took much longer than expected, and by the time the car was fully packed, it was around 9:30 p.m. The logical decision would have been to stay at the Academy one more night, get a good night's sleep, and leave early in the morning.”



SAFETY RESEARCH UPDATE

The following information is courtesy of *SafetyLit*, a service of the San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health. Information about the occurrence and prevention of injuries is available from many sources and professional disciplines. *SafetyLit* staff and volunteers regularly examine and summarize 2,600 scholarly journals from 35 professional disciplines, and scores of reports on safety research from government agencies and organizations. We've included these summaries in *Road & Rec* for their interest to the Air Force community. For more information, go to www.safetylit.org.

Voluntary Ignition-Interlock Program Helps DWI Offenders

Aims: This project evaluated health outcomes following an alcohol ignition-interlock program by assessing hospital care utilization and sick leave register data relative to controls with revoked licenses, but with no comparable opportunity to participate in an AIPP. **Setting:** In Sweden, driving while impaired offenders can now select voluntarily a two-year AIPP in lieu of 12 months' license revocation. The AIPP includes regular medical check-ups designed to alter alcohol use. **Design:** The study is a quasi-experimental intent-to-treat design; accordingly, the intervention group includes 48 percent of the participants who were dismissed from the AIPP before completion. **Finding:** The control group (865 individuals) showed increased hospital care and sick leave after license revocation following the DWI. Among the 1,266 people in the AIPP, however, significantly fewer needed hospital care relative to controls, and relative to their own care utilization before the DWI offense. This occurred whether care reflected all diagnosis or only alcohol-related diagnosis. Also, sick-leave data showed significantly fewer AIPP group individuals using sick leave relative to the control group, and relative to their own pre-treatment period. These significant health benefits disappear in the post-treatment period. However, among those who actually do complete the entire AIPP, sustained positive health effects are observed three and four years after the DWI offense. **Conclusions:** Voluntary participation in an AIPP has favorable effects with less need for hospital care or sick leave. This is probably linked to reduced alcohol consumption during the program and to the ability to continue driving.

(Source: Bjerre B, Marques P, Selén J, Thorsson U. *Addiction* 2007. Copyright © 2007, Blackwell Publishing.)

Gender Differences Among Young Drivers

PROBLEM: Young male novice drivers are overrepresented in injury motor-vehicle crashes, compared to females in the same category. This difference in crash involvement is often assumed to include factors such as overestimation, risk acceptance, and sensation-seeking, but it can also be related to acquisition of knowledge, skills, insight, and driving experience. Therefore, this study explored possible gender differences among 18-24-year-olds in Sweden regarding practicing as learners, outcome of the driver's tests, and crash involvement during the first year after licensure. **Method:** Data for 2005 from different sources (e.g., questionnaires, license test, and crash statistics) were examined. It was not possible to follow individual subjects through all stages or in all analyses. Nevertheless, the study design did enable scrutinization and discussion of gender differences between younger inexperienced drivers with respect to education and training, license test results, and initial period of licensure. **Results:** Males and females assimilated tuition in different ways. Females studied more theory, pursued training in a more structured manner, practiced more elements of driving in several different environments, and participated more extensively in driving school instruction. National statistics showed that females did better on the written test but not on the driving test. Males were involved in 1.9 more injury crashes per 1,000 drivers than females during their first year of licensed driving. The proportional distribution of crash types was the same for both sexes during the first period as novice drivers, but the circumstances surrounding the accidents varied (e.g., males were involved in more night crashes). **Impact on traffic safety:** More structured training while learning appears to be one of the reasons why females initially do better than males as novice drivers. Therefore, in the future, driver education should focus not only on matters such as the amount of time spent on training and preconditioning, but also on the importance of the organization and content of the learning process.

(Source: Nyberg A, Gregersen NP. *J Safety Res* 2007. Copyright © 2007, U.S. National Safety Council, Published by Elsevier.)

Like A Bomb Had Gone Off



MSGT RAY CAWLEY

151 ARW/MEO
Salt Lake City UT

It's strange how life can change in the blink of an eye. One second I'm riding my Kawasaki KLR650 home on the freeway on a bright, sunny afternoon, then—BOOM! All of a sudden, everything's happening so fast, there just isn't any time to think—"What happened, what do I do, where is everybody else on the road?"—there's only time to react.

A rear tire had blown out on a large tow truck I was following. I've seen semi truck tires blow before, but not like this. This was an explosion, just like a bomb had gone off. In my mind's eye, I can still see most of the tire sailing about 30 feet in the air. The truck is swerving back and forth, and both he and I are enveloped in a big cloud of dust and debris. All I can remember is braking hard, using both brakes—real hard! I've ridden motorcycles for more than 25 years, for probably 40,000 miles altogether. Because of that experience, I'm hitting the brakes before even being aware of

doing it. Tire pieces are pinging off my helmet, face shield, and everywhere. I even had pieces in my shoes. After swerving to miss the debris in the road, I managed to stop about 8 feet from the truck's bumper.

Then I go through a mental checklist. "Is everyone all right?" Yes. "Does the truck driver need help?" No. "Am I safe stopped here?" NO. I see a long space in the traffic and take off, grateful to be alive.

I survived the close encounter, without even a scratch. But I still think, "What did I do wrong, and what could I have done better?" I was using the two-second rule, having just completed the Experienced Motorcycle Rider course the previous month. Sometimes, two seconds isn't enough time.

Training and experience saved my life. Give yourself space—lots of it. My full-face helmet and sunglasses were real assets. Those blown tire fragments can be real hot. Gloves? Check. Protective jacket and boots? Uh, no. For heaven's sake, it was 95 degrees! Who can wear a jacket and boots? But then again, who can afford NOT to wear them? ■

Choosing Between Two Bad Options



MAJ LEO A. NEVELL

9 SOS/SE
Eglin AFB FL

I've been riding motorcycles since I was 8 years old, and will continue to ride them well into the future. I've always had respect for motorcycles and the risk associated with them. In early May 1996, I had an appointment to drop off my 1995 Honda CBR 600 F3 at the dealer. I had owned the bike for about 15 months, put about 1700 miles on it, and it was due for its first oil change/check-up. It turned out to be a perfect day – 70 degrees and not a cloud in the sky – so I decided to take my bike out for one last ride before I dropped it off.

I put on some heavy denim jeans, a jacket, leather boots and gloves, and my helmet. Then I jumped on I-25 headed south from Great Falls toward Helena, Montana. I'd made this trip many times before and was very familiar

with the roads. I stopped at a gas station about halfway for a short break, and then continued. This part of the trip took about two hours. Later I stopped and filled up with gas in Helena. The temperature was now in the 80s, and I decided to take off my jacket and just ride in my T-shirt. That decision would come back to bite me later.

After grabbing a bite to eat, I got back on I-15 going north toward Great Falls. I was in no hurry, and was just enjoying the ride. As I passed the exit I'd stopped at on the way down, it was starting to get a little chilly in the wind. I decided I'd take the next exit and go back to that same gas station. The plan was to stop, use the rest room, put on my jacket, and then get back on the road. However, I was not familiar with the next exit.

As I approached the off-ramp, I let off the throttle and began to coast. I could see that the ramp made an "S" turn, right then left, and crossed back over the highway via

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“I only had two choices:

- 1. Hit the guardrail head on, probably fly off the motorcycle, over the handlebars, over the guardrail, and fall to the interstate below, where I could get hit by a very fast-moving vehicle of who-knows-what magnitude.*

- 2. Lay the bike down, and slide it into the guardrail, making a voluntary and somewhat controlled departure from the motorcycle, and stay on the overpass, avoiding the additional peril that lay below.*

I chose the latter.”

an overpass. I took the first curve to the right, and about halfway through the curve, I noticed a cattle grate crossing the road in between the two curves. Using my 17 years of motorcycling experience and what I learned in the Motorcycle Rider Course, I decided to stand the bike up and cross the grate with the bike vertical. I crossed the grate with no problems and immediately started to lean the bike for the left turn. Standing the bike up left me very wide in the turn, but I was still in control and comfortable with the situation.

As I continued around the curve, headed for the overpass, my rear tire started to break loose. The motorcycle began to fishtail, and I

almost lost control. I was able to correct for the fishtail and regained control of the bike. I was heading straight for the guardrail at the top of the overpass. I quickly analyzed the situation and realized I only had two choices:

1. Hit the guardrail head on, probably fly off the motorcycle, over the handlebars, over the guardrail, and fall to the interstate below, where I could get hit by a very fast-moving vehicle of who-knows-what magnitude.

2. Lay the bike down, and slide it into the guardrail, making a voluntary and somewhat controlled departure from the motorcycle, and stay on the overpass, avoiding the additional peril that lay below.

I chose the latter. I laid the motorcycle over

on its left side and slid into the guardrail. My left hip dragged momentarily, and then I separated from the motorcycle and tumbled a couple of times. I caught myself and began to slide along the pavement on my hands and knees for about 40 feet, and then I came to a stop. I got up and brushed myself off. I did a quick once-over to make sure I was OK, and then walked over to my motorcycle and picked it up. I put down the kickstand, took my helmet and gloves off, and set them on the seat. I didn't have a clue as to what went wrong.

I walked back to where I started to lose control and immediately figured out what happened. I grew up in the Midwest, where they use salt on the roads in the winter. In Montana, they don't use salt. They use cinders, which are finely crushed rock. As the snow melts, the cinders get pushed to the side of the road. As I was coming around the curve, my rear tire hit the cinders. They acted like ball bearings, causing me to lose control.

I pulled out my cell phone to call my roommate, but the battery was dead. I started looking at my bike to see how much damage was done, and if I'd be able to baby it back to the gas station. There was a lot of damage, but most of it was cosmetic. A couple of things could have posed a problem, though. The gearshift lever and footrest on the left side had snapped off, half the clutch lever was gone, and the front rim was dinged from where it hit the guardrail. I was able to get the transmission to change gears by moving the lever with my hand, but there was no way I would be able to change gears while moving, so I put it into second gear. What was left of the clutch lever was still working. The front rim was still holding air, but I didn't know for how long. I also was unsure as to how the rim striking the guardrail would affect the balance or alignment. I didn't see any other choice but to try to make it back to the gas station.

The bike started right up, so I shut it off and grabbed my helmet. I looked it over for chips, scratches, cracks, or other damage. To my surprise, there wasn't a single mark on it. I never hit my head at all during the entire incident. That was the first moment that I

started to think about possible injuries, and how lucky I was. As I was putting on my gloves, I noticed that the leather on the palms was damaged. The friction from my slide had melted the leather. I also noticed that I had a 4-inch circular "strawberry" on my left forearm. My hip and knees were a little sore, but my jeans and T-shirt didn't show any obvious damage. I started the bike, and slowly and carefully drove back to the gas station.

I used the pay phone to call my roommate. I explained what had happened, and asked him to bring my truck and loading ramps down to pick me up. I asked the attendant to call the police so I could report it. While I was waiting, I bought some first aid supplies. I went into the bathroom and cleaned the wound on my forearm. I looked for other injuries, and besides a large bruise on my hip and a few other minor scrapes and bruises, I was in good shape. But that was the good news.

When the police officer showed up, we drove to the scene, then back to the gas station to look at the bike. He gave me a ticket for "Improper Use of a Montana Roadway." My roommate came, picked my bike and me up, and took us back to Great Falls.

The bike had more than \$4,500 worth of damage. Every piece of plastic fairing was damaged either from sliding on the road, or from hitting the guardrail. Add the front rim, turn signals, clutch, gearshift, foot peg, and other items, and it would have cost more to fix the motorcycle than it was worth. It was deemed a total loss.

Looking back at this accident, I am grateful for many things – most of all that I walked away with just minor injuries. Although it was called something different back then, risk management did have a role in my survival. Had I not had worn protective equipment, or had I not chosen to lay the bike down, my injuries could have been much worse, or fatal.

On the other hand, had I kept the jacket on, I could have walked away from it without a single scratch. I have a constant reminder of that day more than nine years ago, in the form of a circular "road rash" scar on my forearm. I still enjoy riding, but I'll never ride again without proper protective equipment. ■



MAJ RANDY McCALIP

14 MDOS
Columbus AFB MS

On June 18, 2006, my family had a life-changing experience. The “lessons learned” from this experience could save your life.

After spending Father’s Day weekend with my in-laws, we started the trek back to Columbus AFB, Miss. The first half of the drive was on the interstate, so I wasn’t too concerned when it started raining. About an hour into the trip, the rain stopped, and I breathed a sigh of relief. I clicked on the cruise control and allowed my brain to wander wherever it wanted. My wife and I discussed the trip and plans for the summer while my two sons were in the back of the van playing video games. I was looking forward to getting home before dark so I could ride my bicycle. As an avid triathlete, my mind drifted to the upcoming racing season as my wife continued to talk. Yes, I admit neither my wife nor the interstate had my full attention. Even though the roads were still wet, we were on a major interstate that, as best as I could tell, didn’t have any standing water.

Suddenly, the van started drifting left. My

wife asked, “What are you doing?” I replied, “Nothing.” The van spun 360 degrees on the interstate and then into the median. There is nothing worse than being out of control and having no idea where you’re going or what you’re going to hit. The van hit a ditch in the middle of the median and flipped twice. When everything stopped moving, my sons started screaming. Under the circumstances, it was a pleasant sound. Thank goodness that everyone was buckled-up. For precautionary reasons, my wife and sons were transported to the hospital. They were released later that evening.

Two weeks later, I drove to the salvage yard to pick up our personal belongings in the van. I was still in shock, because that was my first accident after driving for 23 years. I was still asking myself, “What happened?” and “What could I have done differently?” I was cleaning out the van when the owner of the salvage yard approached me. Since he responds to accidents daily, I explained what happened. Without hesitation, he asked, “Did you have your cruise control on?” I said, “Yes.” He said that more than half the wrecks he responds to involve drivers using cruise control on wet roads. He explained that when the cruise control is engaged and one or more tires lose traction, the

Out of Control



vehicle speeds up and causes a hydroplane. Later that evening, I Googled his explanation, and sure enough, he was correct.

I wish the story ended there. About two months later, I was driving to Tuscaloosa, Ala. when I suddenly hit a patch of rain. I didn't have to dig far into my clue bag to remember to disengage the cruise control and slow down. Suddenly, an SUV driving the opposite direction hydroplaned. The driver frantically tried to stay in control, but the vehicle had a mind of its own. The SUV ran off the road and hit a tree. Luckily, all five occupants had their seat belts on. I stopped and asked the driver if he had the cruise control on, and he said, "Yes." At that moment, I felt compelled to write an article on my "lessons learned" and the dangers of using cruise control during wet conditions.

Photos provided by author

Recommendations:

1. This is a no-brainer, but some of you are still guilty. WEAR YOUR SEAT BELTS!
2. Don't drive with your cruise control on when the road is wet.
3. When the roads are wet, slow down.
4. Pull over if anyone has to unbuckle a seat belt.
5. Secure all items in the car (e.g. portable TV).
6. Check tire tread and pressure regularly.
7. Please send this article to your loved ones. It could save their lives.

Driving is inherently dangerous, because conditions and the environment are ever-changing. However, you can greatly mitigate the risks by being attentive and learning from others ... like me! ■



James D. Leach
AFRL/HED
Brooks City-Base TX

DEFENSIVE DRIVING:

COOL WITH SUN SHADES

This story involves my very first auto accident—at least the first that I admit to! I was serving my internship with the Corps of Engineers. This was my first full-time professional job, and it was nice to go from being a starving student with nothing, to having a steady paycheck that would lead to a future of self-sufficiency. After all the effort to reach this milestone, I decided it was time to protect the investment I had made in myself. As a new Safety Engineer (by title only), it seemed a good idea to start using seat belts. I soon learned to follow the Corps District policy for government vehicle operations by making sure my seat belt was fastened before I started the engine in my own car. It wasn't long before this became a habit. Little did I know that this practice was about to save me from a potential injury, as well as teach me more about mishap

prevention from personal experience!

My route to work had me driving into the morning sun. On one sunny day, I was headed east at a controlled intersection where I needed to turn left. I looked at the traffic light, saw green and made my turn. The next thing I knew, I felt and heard this big WHAM!—as another car slammed into the passenger side of my car. I took a good jolt, but restrained by the seat belt/shoulder harness, I was uninjured.

I immediately got out to assess the damage. The young lady who collided with me was not pleased. “Not a prospective date,” I thought. We decided to move our cars out of the intersection, so they wouldn’t cause another accident. While waiting for the police, we walked out on a sloped embankment next to the street. I wanted to get a closer look at the intersection to figure out exactly what had happened. While walking along the embankment, I lost my balance and stumbled a little.

“Are you drunk or something?” my new acquaintance asked.

“What, before 8 o’clock in the morning? You must be crazy,” I said. I was definitely not making a favor-

On one sunny day, I was headed east at a controlled intersection where I needed to turn left. I looked at the traffic light, saw green and made my turn. The next thing I knew, I felt and heard this big WHAM!—as another car slammed into the passenger side of my car.

There was so much glare from the morning sun that one could not distinguish between the red and green traffic light signals.

able impression. When I reached the intersection, my suspicions were confirmed. There was so much glare from the morning sun that one could not distinguish between the red and green traffic light signals. I eventually convinced my new friend of this when we saw a near-collision that would have been identical to ours, involv-

ing a tractor-trailer. When the police arrived, she still accused me of being DUI, but I was completely sober.

My car was still drivable, so I went in to work, and put into practice my recently acquired skills in mishap analysis and prevention.

My first conclusion was that the seat belts had probably saved me from injury. I now had a lifetime safety practice. To prevent a repeat mishap, I concluded I needed a pair of sun shades to minimize the effects of the glare. It took a little while to make this a steady habit.

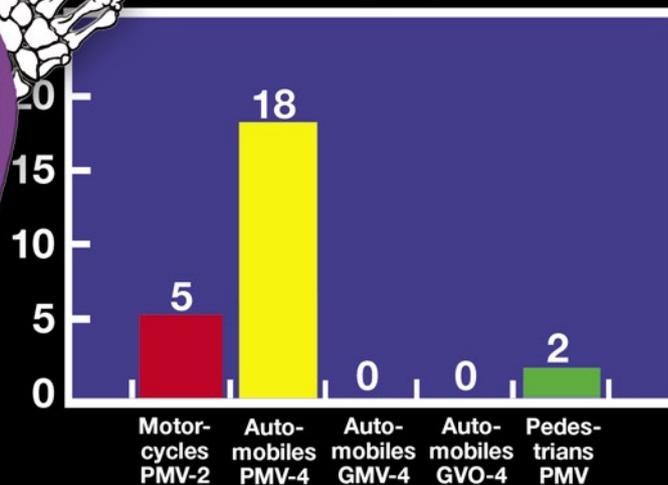
Now, more than 25 years later after this adventure, I panic if I get into the car and can’t find my shades. For me, sun shades are a defensive driving tool—a practice to continue for life. Besides, I can’t afford to have more women thinking that I drive around drunk! ■

Snapshot on Safety

2nd Quarter FY07 Update

As of March 30, 2007

Motor Vehicle Fatalities Total FY07



BRIAN DYE
HQ AFSC/SEG

Unawareness of Surroundings, Weather and Heavy Traffic Don't Mix

After running several errands, an Airman called his mother on his cell phone at about 6:30 p.m. and said, "Traffic is heavy." The weather was cloudy with light rain as he was driving east on a 4-lane interstate at about 20-30 mph. As traffic ahead stopped suddenly, the two vehicles ahead of the Airman applied brakes and stopped. The vehicle directly in front of the Airman also applied brakes, slowed down, and stopped. The

Airman suddenly swerved left into another lane, in front of an eastbound tractor-trailer, without ensuring proper clearance. As the Airman crossed into lane, the front bumper of the semitrailer struck the driver's door of the Airman's vehicle. As a result of the impact, the driver's door and the seat belt webbing were ripped away. The Airman was ejected from the vehicle, thrown forward about 70 feet, and sustained fatal injuries from head and chest trauma.

Lessons Learned:

Poor risk assessment. Unawareness of surroundings, inclement weather and poor vehicle operation don't mix. In all situations, know the surroundings and conditions of the area so you

Non-Motor Vehicle Fatalities Total FY07



can make rational decisions in every situation. Many cities and states are implementing laws banning handheld cell phone use while driving, because of unfortunate accidents like this one. Attention to detail in good or bad driving conditions saves lives.

Horse Play, Hazards and Not Obeying Restrictions: A Bad Combination

Seven Airmen decided to go to the beach to enjoy some recreational activity, after learning a golf tournament had messed up their golfing plans. En route to the beach, they stopped for food, water and non-alcoholic beverages. They arrived at the beach at

about 10:15 a.m. and soon after, six of them entered the water and began playing on or very close to a buoy, which marked the boundary of the authorized swimming area. Rescuers and a witness noticed several of the individuals were outside the authorized limits and tried to warn them. Additionally, one Airman noticed the waves were growing and warned the others that they should return to the beach. After four of them headed back to shore, they heard the other two yelling for help. As two rescuers swam out to help the Airmen, who had been swept past the reef, the remaining bystander called for help. One of the four Airmen who were headed back to shore turned around to try to help the other two Airmen, but he was repeatedly pushed underwater and also was swept past the reef. Rescuers were able to help two of the three to shore. Unfortunately, the search and recovery operation for the missing individuals were unsuccessful.

Lessons Learned:

Poor risk assessment. Horse play, mixed with a lack of knowledge of the surroundings, and failing to adhere to proper restrictions make a bad combination. It's each individual's responsibility to mitigate the risk of injury or death. All of us should always know the hazards and restrictions of our surroundings. Often times, devoting the extra time to learn and talk over the hazards and restrictions could save a life or limb. Awareness and paying attention will help prevent mishaps.

Cell Phones, Speed, Weather and Bad Tires: Deadly Combination

An Airman was traveling to a new duty station when he had to stop because of tire trouble. After having the tire fixed and getting back on the road, traveling on an interstate, he decided he needed to make up the hour he lost for the tire repair. While talking on the cell phone with his best friend and going about 80 mph, he lost control of his vehicle. He crossed the median and collided with another vehicle. At the time of the mishap, rain was falling, causing wet roads. Three of the Airman's tires were worn and should have been replaced. Both drivers suffered fatal injuries.

Lessons Learned:

Once again, poor risk assessment. Preparation and awareness are the keys to success in many situations. Making a mental or written pre-travel checklist can be helpful before traveling. Making sure your equipment is in good working condition and pre-travel activities are conducted safely can ease the stress of a trip and mentally prepare the traveler. Additionally, using a handheld cell phone in inclement weather (or any weather conditions), and traveling at high speeds is not recommended or encouraged. The successful trip is always the one where everyone arrives safely. Pre-trip preparation, including scheduling phone calls when you stop for a break, can make that happen. ■

2006 Air Force Safety Award Winners

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE AWARD

Category I:
Air Force Special Operations Command
Hurlburt Field, FL

CHIEF OF STAFF INDIVIDUAL SAFETY AWARD

James Gregoire
29th Test Support Squadron
Eglin AFB, FL

CHIEF OF STAFF SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SMSgt Steven Benoit
435th Air Base Wing
Ramstein AB, Germany

SAFETY CAREER PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Thomas Diveley
305th Air Mobility Wing
McGuire AFB, NJ

COLONEL WILL L. TUBBS MEMORIAL AWARD FOR GROUND SAFETY

Category I:
Air Combat Command
Langley AFB, VA

Category II:
Air Force Special Operations Command
Hurlburt Field, FL

CHIEF OF STAFF SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

SMSgt Steven Benoit
435th Air Base Wing
Ramstein AB, Germany

AIR FORCE CHIEF OF SAFETY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR GROUND SAFETY

Category I:
5th Bomb Wing
Minot AFB, ND

Category II:
48th Fighter Wing
RAF Lakenheath, UK

Category III:
71st Flying Training Wing
Vance AFB, OK

Category IV:
353rd Special Operations Group
Kadena AB, Japan

Category V:
703rd Munitions Support Squadron
Volkel AB, Germany

