

Air Education and Training Command's **TORCH** Winter 2011



MORE THAN ONE
BRAIN TO FLY PLANE
BRINGING AIRCRAFT HOME
SAFELY A TEAM EFFORT
PAGE 22



ALTERNATE ENDINGS

Many will set out for a fun day of sledding, tobogganing or tubing this winter, but end up in an emergency room. Discover what could save you time, money and ... pain

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A YEAR OF UPS AND DOWNS

Some mishap rates worse than year ago, but better than average

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Car collides with ambulance; three die

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'THREE-LEGGED RACE' IN T-6

Instructor pilot, student make amazing landing in broken aircraft

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8 A Year of Ups and Downs

As fiscal 2011 came to a close, Air Education and Training Command saw some of its mishap rates take a turn for the worse when compared to the record-setting lows of 2010. But many of the rates were still lower than a three-year average. See what an analysis of the data tells us.

10 A Wrong Turn with GPS

An Airman and his three passengers hit an ambulance head on over Labor Day weekend. With both vehicles traveling 55 mph, the Airman and two of his passengers died from the violent collision. The cause? The Airman had been using his cell phone's GPS app, took his eyes off the road and crossed the center line.

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12 An Alternate Ending

Sledding, tobogganing and tubing on snow-covered hills is supposed to be fun. But when many people set out for a day of frolicking in the cold powder, they often experience an alternate ending ... a painful trip to the emergency room.



by Dave Nolan

18 "THREE-LEGGED RACE"

IN THE T-6 TEXAN II

When the flight controls malfunctioned in a T-6 Texan II from Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, the instructor pilot and his student had to resort to flying the plane much like running a three-legged race. One controlled the ailerons while the other operated the elevators for one amazing landing!

TORCH TALK 2

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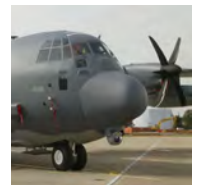


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TORCH is published quarterly to help promote safety awareness in Air Education and Training Command, the Air Force and Department of Defense. This funded Air Force magazine is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of TORCH are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Directorate of Safety, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, following public affairs publication guidelines outlined in DOD Instruction 5120.4 and Air Force Instruction 35-101. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

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OBLIVIOUS TO THE OBVIOUS

During my time at 13th Air Force, we ran Joint Task Force Support Forces Antarctica, resupplying the National Science Foundation's Antarctic mission. Our folks were exposed to temperatures as low as minus 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The picture above was taken in the tunnels that run under the South Pole Station and the temp was minus 56 ... my eyebrows even had icicles. The need for cold protection in that environment was obvious, and our folks prepared accordingly. But as fall turns to winter across the Air Education and Training Command area of responsibility, sometimes we become oblivious to the obvious.

On a cold morning how many times have you left your heated home, climbed into your car, cranked the heater on and gutted it out while the car warmed up? Maybe you took a light jacket, maybe none at all because you thought that you didn't need one since you would be spending the day inside a climate-controlled environment. But what if your car breaks down and the temperatures are below freezing? Would you have planned differently? Would you have taken a warmer coat?

It only takes one instance where you find yourself unprepared to impart some real-world wisdom.

In the flying business, we use the saying "Dress for egress." ... Meaning that it may be warm inside the cockpit of an aircraft, but if you have to eject or make an emergency landing in freezing temps, you'll be wishing you had that cold-weather gear.

It's as if the different seasons dull our senses; and by the time we get through spring, summer and fall, it takes us a bit to get into winter mode.

Common sense tells us that winter will be accompanied by the same old hazards: freezing temps, snow, slippery roads and icy ramps, just to name a few. But it's not long after winter weather moves in that we start getting reports on the season's first cases of frostbite or hypothermia or first vehicle accidents on slick highways.

Should hunters need to be reminded to dress warmly and carry waterproof matches with them? Should drivers need to be told to slow down and follow at a safer distance in icy or snowy conditions? Should pilots need to be advised to follow their cold-weather checklists when the temperatures dip? In a perfect world, no. In reality, most definitely, yes.

In this issue, we delve into ways people get hurt sledding (page 12). An obvious rule of sledding should be "ensure your path is free of obstructions." So it's interesting that we have examples of Airmen who have injured themselves slamming into everything from trees and rocks to concrete barriers and telephone poles. On the flying side we have a story of a pilot who ignored the obvious; he didn't follow his cold-weather checklist and ensure the fuels system icing inhibitor was added to his aircraft's fuel (page 25). The result? Ice formed in the fuel, blocking its flow and leading to a chain of events that destroyed the aircraft and killed all 14 people on-board, including 13 members of the same family.

So as the temperatures grow colder, take a moment to reset the gray matter and tune in to the obvious hazards that come with winter. We at AETC safety wish you a safe and happy holiday season!

"In the flying business, we use the saying 'Dress for egress.' ... Meaning that it may be warm inside the cockpit of an aircraft, but if you have to eject or make an emergency landing in freezing temps, you'll be wishing you had that cold-weather gear."

IMPALED WITH OWN ARROW

Your cover story titled "Head Hunter" in the September/October 2011 issue of Torch was very interesting and hit close to home. Most people probably don't know how common falls from deer stands or trees are for hunters. When I was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., with security forces, my unit had to respond to an incident on the base where a bow hunter fell from a tree and was impaled by his own arrow. He tried to make it to his vehicle, but died before he got there.

*Chief Master Sgt. Charles Meyer
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas*

UNFAIR GAME

In reference to your hunting story in the September/October 2011 Torch ("Head Hunter," page 12), I never understood the appeal of hiding up in trees and putting out feeders to lure in unsuspecting game for an am-

bush. Where's the sport in that? The weapons we use are enough of an advantage. Putting out feeders and cowering in treetops seems a little unfair and, well, wrong. Anyway, I have a tip to avoid falls from deer stands and

trees. Don't use deer stands, and stay out of the trees. It's more sporting to hunt on the ground — without food as bait — and you get more exercise as well.

*Dennis Cohen
Via e-mail*



LETTERS TO TORCH

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PLANKING 'SO STUPID'



by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Bendet

I don't get the whole planking thing (reference "Tales of the Strange" article titled "Life Claimed by Internet 'Planking' Craze," September/October 2011 issue, page 6). It's so stupid. No wonder people who participate are adding a danger factor ... the whole thing is so boring otherwise. Well, as the Darwin Awards would say, it's just another way to cull out the less intelligent members of the "herd."

*Belinda Miles
Via e-mail*

DON'T DOUSE TORCH

I was sorry to read that Torch is cutting back to four editions per year ("Winds of Change," September/October 2011 issue, "From the Director" column). Your magazine is so "spot on" when it comes to communicating the safety message, and I have used many of your articles during my weekly staff meeting safety tips.

I understand the budget cuts, but safety publications shouldn't be one of the reduced items. Good luck in maintaining the quality of the magazine.

*John Forslund
Leavenworth, Kan.*

PROTECT YOUR DOME

A helmetless motorcyclist dies while protesting New York's mandatory helmet law ("Tales of the Strange," September/October 2011 Torch, page 6)? Enough said. Wear a helmet, people. If you are a military member, it's mandatory when you ride a motorcycle anyway.

*Casey Lunt
Via e-mail*

2012 TORCH CALENDAR

The 23rd Flying Training Squadron got the new 2012 calendars in today. For those who don't know, the 23rd FTS is the initial pipeline for all Air Force helicopter pilots flying the TH-1H. With that said, on the first page upon opening the calendar, it shows the different tracks from the T-6, then on to T-38s and T-1s. What about helos? Are we not one team one fight? I know for the month of June it has an HH-60G and the track on the side, but what about the front page? I understand we are a small facet of the Air Force, but helos are still in Air Education and Training Command and are a track as well. It would have been nice to see one of the most taxed assets on the front page along with the T-38s and T-1s. Just food for thought!

*First Lt. Peter J. Borchelt
Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.*

The helos are definitely an important part of the "fight club," which is why we emphasized the helicopter training track in the calendar during the months of June and September. But you're right. It would have been good to work a Huey into the inside front cover layout.



The 2012 Torch Calendars are great. Our Air Force guys (at Lockheed Martin Marietta) were very impressed with them, as was I.

*Kim Lee
Marietta, Ga.*



At the San Juan Military Entrance Processing Station, Puerto Rico, we are the Air Force liaison office amongst civilians and members from all other services. The calendars — and magazines — are highly coveted by all, not only for the pictures but also for the monthly info. Our first shipment of calendars is already gone! Thank you for an excellent product; congratulations to all involved!

*Tech. Sgt. Anthony Ruiz
San Juan, Puerto Rico*

The 2012 version of the Torch Calendar is fantastic!

*Deborah Fluhrer
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas*



Wow! Today, I received 10 copies of the new 2012 Torch Calendar, and they all got snapped up before I could get out of the command section (North American Aerospace Defense Command headquarters). Great safety calendar!

*Mike McKenzie
Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.*



The annual Torch Calendar is very popular in the 344th Training Squadron. We have close to 200 technical training students come through our squadron each month.

*Tech. Sgt. John T. Hale
Lackland Air Force Base, Texas*



Thank you for a truly great calendar and magazine. It is a very popular calendar at the office (Air Force Personnel Center). The Julian dates and the legal holidays make them very useful in our daily work. The photos are also great to have hanging in the office and at home.

*Robert Rivera
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas*



CHILD ORPHANED BY DRUNK DRIVER NOW LOSES GRANDPA



Nathaniel Britt and his grandpa, retired Master Sgt. Ronald Lee, release a balloon Nov. 11, 2010, to celebrate his mother's birthday. Tech. Sgt. Audra Britt was killed by a drunk driver in April 2009. Lee died of a stroke Sept. 24.

He lost his mom and dad to a drunk driver at age 4. Now at age 7, Nathaniel Britt has lost one of his legal guardians ... his grandfather, Ronald Lee.

Lee, a 57-year-old retired master sergeant, died Sept. 24, six weeks after suffering a stroke. Nathaniel appeared on the cover of the March/April 2011 issue of *Torch*, in a feature that detailed the deaths of his parents, Tech. Sgts. Maurice and Audra Britt, who were both stationed at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. They had been killed by a drunk driver who smashed his truck into their motorcycle April 5, 2009. The drunk driver, who had been driving 65 mph the wrong way into on-coming traffic in Austin, Texas, was arrested and ultimately sent to prison to serve a 20-year sentence for intoxication manslaughter and another five years for fleeing the scene.

"This has been a very traumatic experience for all of us because no one saw this coming, just like when my sister and brother-in-law died," said Staff Sgt. Aron Lee, Ronald's son and Nathaniel's uncle who got a humanitarian assignment to

Lackland to help his parents raise Nathaniel after he was orphaned. "It was a bad case of déjà vu."

Aron counts his dad as another victim of the drunk driver.

"The death of my sister definitely played a role in my father's demise — I'd bet money on it," Aron said. "It's no secret that Dad never got over Audra's death. He always carried a piece of it with him. It weighed heavy on his heart and mind."

Ronald would have celebrated his 58th birthday Nov. 2, as well as 40 years of marriage to his wife, Carol, Dec. 31.

Aron said his nephew took his grandpa's death pretty hard.

"Nathaniel was extremely sad when we broke the news to him. He immediately started praying. ... He tearfully asked God not to let any more of his family go," said Aron, who, in a case of bad timing, also will soon have to leave his nephew in San Antonio as he reports to his new assignment at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, Dec. 6.

"Nathaniel is holding up OK," the staff sergeant added. "He's a very strong young

man. But we watch him closely; because with something this traumatic, you never know what the short- and long-term effects will be for someone so young."

— Tim Barela



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Samuel Berdick

Sharing a lighter moment, Nathaniel and Ronald were very close. After losing both his parents and his grandpa, Nathaniel is now being raised by his grandma, Carol Lee, with a strong family support system.

A RIDER'S REALITY CHECK

On April 28, 2008, I became a dad for the first time. I was on cloud nine as I dreamt about all the great times and fun memories we would create with our new beautiful baby girl.

Then two weeks later, those dreams nearly came to a sudden and violent end.

May 12 would mark my first day back to work since the birth of my daughter. On the way to my job as the assistant NCO in charge of the Dunn Dental Laboratory at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, I lost control of my motorcycle on the interchange between Interstate 35 South and Highway 90 West.

As I slid across the asphalt, one had to wonder: Would my daughter be fatherless before even her third week on Earth?

I was one of those who had to wait till I moved out of the house before I could have a motorcycle. I've been making up for lost time ever since. With nearly 15 years of motorcycle experience at the time and 10 years as a Motorcycle Safety Foundation instructor, how could things have gone so wrong so quickly?

As I drove on the interchange in the outside lane, I suddenly spotted a dead animal in the road. I swerved around the carcass, then immediately switched to the inside lane. But a car was merging into the lane ahead of me. I attempted to maneuver my 1999 Honda, Valkyrie Interstate 1500 around the vehicle.

What I didn't know at the time is that I had picked up some blood and guts from around the dead animal on my tires, making them slippery. So as soon as I initiated the lean, the bike slid and low-sided.

I remember seeing sparks and the traffic behind me as I slid along the road. I let the bike go, and it flipped to the other side. (I guess I don't like to do things half way; I couldn't just damage one side, now could I?)

Post road surfing, I had a quarter-sized rub on my helmet; scrapes and holes through my vest and jacket from shoulder to behind; a hole in one of my gloves; scrapes on the legs and back of my chaps; and some scuffing on the boots. Initially, I thought I was uninjured. Later that day, however, I discovered I had broken

the scaphoid bone in my wrist. Still, a broken wrist was a small price to pay for the type of mishap I had on a busy interchange at highway speeds.

Somebody later told me, "You were lucky you were wearing your gear."

I responded, "Luck had nothing to do with it."

You see, I always wear my protective gear when riding — even when it's San Antonio hot. That morning I was clad in the same thing I don every time I straddle my bike: helmet, jacket, vest, chaps, boots and gloves. Had I not had on all that protective gear, I definitely wouldn't have walked away from the crash.

As it is, my wrist healed (with the help of a screw), and I am back on the road.

As far as my bike goes, most of the damage was to the bags, trunk and faring. The engine guards did their job. If your bike doesn't have them, go buy them! If you ride a sport bike, get sliders put on! Not only did they protect the bike, they also protected me. Only a small scratch to the engine and one minor ding to the exhaust. I had to replace the front faring and engine guards, and everything got a new paint job; but in the grand scheme of things, minor damage.

Now on to my reality check. I ride 20,000-plus miles a year and was my squadron's motorcycle safety monitor. Despite all of my experience, training and preparation, I ended up sliding down the highway with life and death in the balance. It can happen to anyone, at anytime, in an instant. Remain aware of your surroundings, don't take anything for granted, and always aggressively search for hazards.

Remember, in making the choice to get out there and ride, we are accepting a greater risk level. Take the steps to manage and reduce your risk. Overall, ride safe, ride smart, wear your gear, and ride within your limits. Like my daughter, there are people depending on you to make it home safely each day.

— Master Sgt. Matt Petrie
Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.



Just shortly after becoming a dad, Master Sgt. Matt Petrie nearly left his baby daughter fatherless during a motorcycle mishap while stationed at Lackland AFB, Texas.

by Tech. Sgt. Matthew Haman

GIANT SNOWBALLS

CAN BE DEADLY

Snowball fights can provide plenty of winter entertainment, but when the spheres of snow grow bigger than their handlers, tragedy can quickly strike.

In January 1958, *The Times News* of Hendersonville, N.C., reported that a giant snowball killed 24-year-old Martial Etienne while his fiancée watched helplessly.

Etienne was rolling the mammoth ball of snow to amuse his fiancée and members of her family at Les Bois in Basle, Switzerland. He had built the snowball to about 7 feet in diameter when it got away from him on a slope near the village.

Somehow, the young man became stuck to the snowball and was killed by its weight as it spun out of control toward the village. The snowball rolled over him repeatedly as it picked up speed down the hill.

In April 1989, *Weekly World News* told the story of a 12-year-old schoolboy from Longtown, England, who died from suffocation after being buried alive by a giant snowball.

Robin Morrell apparently slipped while pushing a huge snowball down a hill near his home on the family's 100-acre farm. When the snowball started to roll away from him, he tried to outrun it. But he tripped, fell and was pinned to the ground under the huge mass of snow and ice.

Though he was found only a few minutes later by his 15-year-old brother Colin – who frantically tried to dig him out with his bare hands – Robin had already died of suffocation.

In a similar incident in February 2005, 10-year-old Peter Strang of Aberdeenshire, England, died after being crushed by a giant snowball he and his friends had made.

“People think of snow as soft and fluffy; but if you pack enough of it together it becomes hard, compact and very heavy,” said Dave Etrheim, Air Education and Training Command Ground Safety Division. “You can see people on YouTube intentionally getting run over by these giant snowballs just for a few laughs. Not smart. They are risking injury or even death. Taking the time for a little risk assessment and applying some common sense can go a long way.”

— Tim Barela



photo composite by David M. Stack

MOST HOME FIRE DEATHS HAPPEN IN PROPERTIES WITHOUT WORKING SMOKE ALARMS

Roughly two-thirds of home fire deaths in 2005-2009 resulted from fires in properties without working smoke alarms, according to the report "Smoke Alarms in U.S. Home Fires," released by the National Fire Protection Association Oct. 25.

The report examines the number of reported fires in U.S. households with and without working smoke alarms, as well as the effectiveness of smoke alarms in preventing fire-related deaths.

"Working smoke alarms are essential in saving lives from fire," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of communications for NFPA. "We know you can have as little as three minutes to get out if you have a fire before it becomes deadly. The early warning provided by smoke alarms gives you extra time to escape."

For more information on smoke alarms and safety tips, visit the National Fire Protection Association's Web site at www.nfpa.org/smokealarms.

KEY FINDINGS IN THE REPORT

- ▶▶ The death rate per 100 reported fires was twice as high in homes without a working smoke alarm as it was in home fires with smoke alarm protection.
- ▶▶ Out of all home fire deaths, 38 percent resulted from fires in which no smoke alarms were present.
- ▶▶ Hardwired smoke alarms are more reliable than those powered solely by batteries.
- ▶▶ Many homes do not have the protection recommended in recent editions of NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code, which requires interconnected smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home.

— National Fire Protection Association



SMOKE ALARM RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶▶ Install smoke alarms inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- ▶▶ For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms so when one sounds they all sound.
- ▶▶ Use both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms, also known as dual sensor alarms. An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires, and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires.
- ▶▶ Replace all smoke alarms every 10 years or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested.
- ▶▶ Test all smoke alarms at least once a month by using the test button.

— National Fire Protection Association



A Year of Ups and Downs

Some mishap rates worse than a year ago, but better than average

Mishap prevention is more than numbers, bits of data or rates. It is action taken by Airmen at all levels to make sound risk decisions at the appropriate time. Unfortunately, each year many Air Education and Training Command members willingly choose to do just the opposite, according to command safety experts.

Safety data gathered from fiscal 2011 helped identify trends and areas where the command can improve. With that being said, AETC had a challenging year in the area of reducing fatal mishaps. Unfortunately, the command returned to previous norms with nine fatal mishaps in fiscal 2011 compared to just one in its record-setting low year in fiscal 2010. While this is in line with recent historical averages, it still equates to nine families, nine squadrons and dozens of fellow

wingmen dealing with the tragedy of losing an Airman to a preventable mishap.

“While we saw both increases in flight and ground mishaps over the previous year, it’s no time to panic,” said Col. Creig A. Rice, AETC director of safety. “We have to remember that Fiscal Year 2010 was a record-setting year for AETC safety. And while we didn’t match those phenomenal numbers, we were still slightly better when compared to a three-year average on ground mishaps. Also, since 1991 we have seen flight mishaps reduce by more than 50 percent. Not only are we doing better at reducing how much ‘iron we bend,’ but we have also seen a dramatic reduction in how many fatalities we have in aviation mishaps.”

The colonel went on to say that he is proud of the overall safety culture set in the “First Command.”

“In basic military training, we introduce risk management,” Rice said. “At specialized undergraduate pilot training, we reinforce flying safety and operational risk management. At every formal training course, we reinforce mishap prevention. All of these ‘blocking and tackling’ skills build the foundation for combat capability for our Air Force, ensuring we are ready when the fight happens.

“Our overall success in mishap prevention has been a team effort between subordinates, supervisors and leaders at every level.”

That said, the colonel added, “we need to remain dedicated and focused to provide the best possible assistance for our wing’s safety and health programs, even as we face major efficiencies.”

Here is a look at two of the disciplines safety tracked. ✈

FLIGHT SAFETY

In AETC flight safety, Class A, B and C mishaps were up (Class A mishaps are those causing \$2 million or more in damage, a fatality or a destroyed aircraft; Class B mishaps are those resulting in damage greater than or equal to \$500,000 but less than \$2 million; and Class C are those that cost \$50,000 or more, but less than \$500,000).

There were three Class A mishaps involving a T-38 Talon, UH-1H Huey and C-17 Globemaster III. There were six Class Bs involving an F-16 Fighting Falcon, CV-22 Osprey, T-6 Texan II, F-22 Raptor and two T-38s.

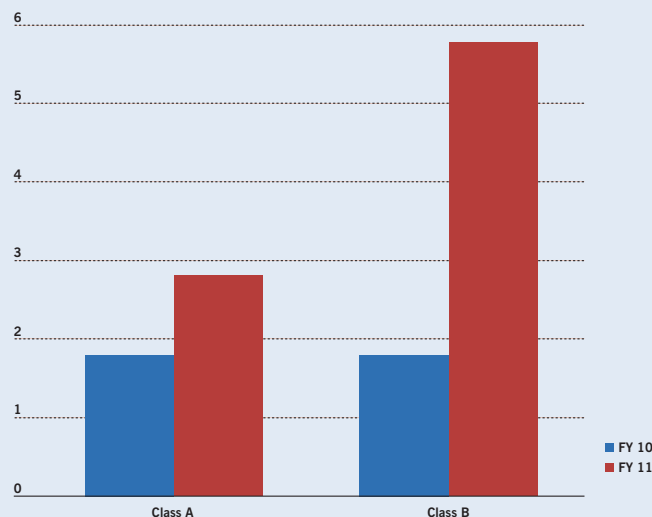
On a positive note, AETC-wide bird strikes in FY11 were reduced by 10 percent over the previous year, despite flying slightly more hours.

Leadership noted an uptick in flight discipline issues. These are instances when aviators willfully violate the rules when there is no operational need, which introduces unnecessary risk into the mission and often has serious consequences. An example of flight discipline would be an incident that happened earlier this year: An instructor pilot texted while flying and performed an unauthorized flyby of his family’s hunting lodge with a student onboard. After facing a flight evaluation board, the instructor’s aviation status was permanently revoked.

Commanders and supervisors should continue to emphasize the consequences of not following the rules in all aviation endeavors.

On another note, while bird strikes have fallen for the second consecutive year, flight ops must not be lured into a false sense of security. Drought conditions throughout the command have contributed to a lower bird population. Springtime historically ushers in an increase in bird activity and bird strikes; so flight ops should amp up their efforts and stay vigilant.

AETC Class A and B Mishaps



HOW THEY CRASHED

1. T-38 crash landing: On Feb. 11, a T-38 Talon pilot exceeded the crew duty day, flared high during a night landing and departed the runway, destroying the aircraft.

2. UH-1N ground impact: On April 27, a UH-1N Huey impacted the ground during hoist operations. The helicopter was destroyed during the post impact fire.

— AETC Flight Safety Division

GROUND SAFETY

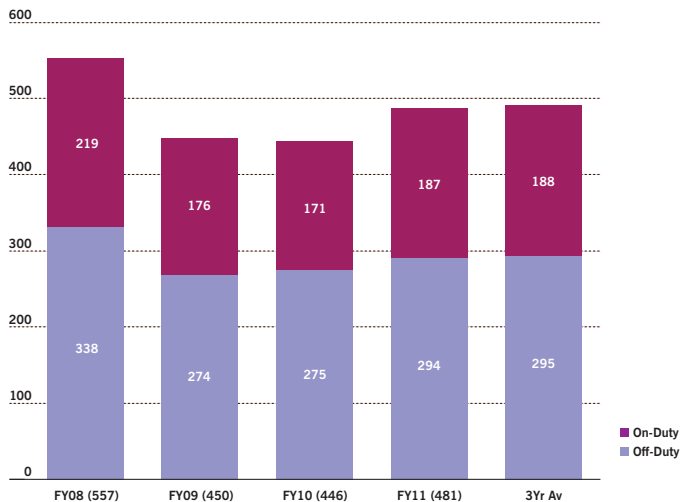
The command experienced 481 ground mishaps in FY11, compared to 446 in FY10. There were 294 off-duty mishaps and 187 on-duty. Sports and recreation injuries led the way with 145 off-duty and 47 on-duty. Leading culprits for sports and rec injuries included basketball, calisthenics and running/jogging.

Off-duty private motor vehicle accidents were the second most with 72 mishaps, down from 90 the previous year.

While sports and recreation activities led the way for off-duty mishaps, it was once again vehicle accidents that caused the most fatalities. There were five motor vehicle deaths, compared to just two in sports and rec. There also was one industrial accident and one miscellaneous (see "How They Died" in the box to the right).

On a high note, AETC has gone two years without a motorcycle fatality. Unfortunately, although only 7 percent of AETC's military population operates motorcycles, they accounted for 38 percent of all private motor vehicle mishaps. The main causes of motorcycle mishaps continue to be unsafe acts by operators: speeding, inexperience, high-risk riding and loss of control.

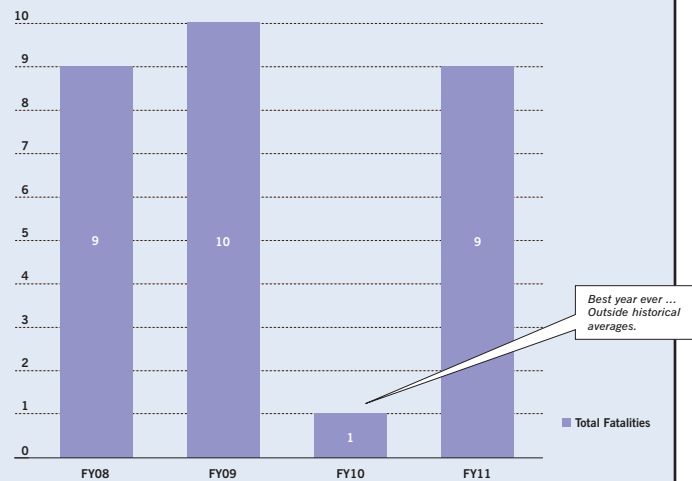
AETC Ground Mishaps



AETC Private Motor Vehicle Mishaps



AETC Fatal Mishaps



HOW THEY DIED

1. Tower collapse (on-duty industrial): On Nov. 12, 2010, a 23-year-old senior airman volunteered to assist with a portable communications tower. While extending the tower to full height, it collapsed on and killed the Airman.

2. Drowning (off-duty miscellaneous): On Feb. 27, a 24-year-old second lieutenant was discovered floating in the Gulf of Mexico. He was fully clothed and had his wallet and keys. It is believed he fell in the gulf after consuming large quantities of alcohol, as his blood alcohol content was .21.

3. Bicycle collision with dump truck (off-duty PMV): On March 11, a 44-year-old major was riding his bicycle when he struck a dump truck making a right turn in front of him. He was wearing a helmet.

4. Pedestrian hit by vehicle (off-duty PMV): On March 26, a 22-year-old airman first class was walking on the shoulder of an unlighted roadway at 12:45 a.m. when an intoxicated civilian driver hit him. The Airman was thrown into oncoming traffic and struck by another vehicle. The Airman's blood alcohol content was .298; the driver's was .1.

5/6. Light aircraft crash (off-duty sports and rec): On April 17, two second lieutenants were flying a Christen Eagle home-built aircraft and performing aerobatics when the aircraft impacted the ground. Both sustained fatal injuries.

7. Struck by tractor trailer (off-duty PMV): On April 24, a couple, both airmen first class, were traveling on the interstate when they were run off the road by one tractor trailer and then struck by another. The 21-year-old wife, who was the driver, received fatal injuries, while her husband, age 20, was treated for minor injuries. Both wore seat belts.

8. Blown tire (off-duty PMV): On Sept. 3, an Airman was driving his vehicle with a female passenger, also an Airman, when a tire blew out causing the vehicle to roll. The driver, who was not wearing his seat belt, was ejected from the vehicle, causing him to suffer fatal injuries. The passenger, who was wearing a seat belt, sustained only minor injuries.

9. Head-on collision with ambulance (off-duty PMV): On Sept. 5, an airman basic attending technical school was driving with three passengers. The Airman reached for his cell phone, which he'd dropped on the floorboard while using its GPS app. While distracted, he crossed the centerline and collided head-on with an ambulance. The Airman and two of his passengers suffered fatal injuries. The third passenger and ambulance personnel sustained minor injuries.

— AETC Ground Safety Division



Courtesy photos

Emergency workers try to save victims of a head-on collision between a car and an ambulance over Labor Day weekend. Three of the four people in the car died, including the driver – an Airman from Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Fla. The driver had been reaching for a cell phone that fell off his lap when he took his eyes off the road, crossed the center line and hit the ambulance with both vehicles traveling 55 mph.



A Wrong Turn with GPS

By Tech. Sgt. RICHARD CAUDILL

Three people die when driver gets distracted and hits an ambulance head-on

In September I had the unenviable duty of briefing Air Education and Training Command leadership on an off-duty private motor vehicle fatality. The mishap? A tragedy as unnecessary as it was unfortunate. It simply should have never occurred.

An Airman from Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., was heading home during the extended Labor Day weekend to spend time with friends and family. The young Airman received his safety brief from his supervisor; filled out his AETC Form 29B and then headed home. After what I'm sure seemed like an all-too-short weekend with family, it was time to head back to base. As he drove back to his duty station, he was accompanied by three of his friends.

I'm sure the drive back was filled with laughter and people in their 20s doing what people in their 20s do on road trips. With his cell phone resting on his leg, the Airman used the global positioning system function on his cell phone to plot his route.

As he drove along at 55 mph, the phone slipped off his leg and onto the floorboard.

The Airman, just like most people who drop things in the car, attempted to retrieve it. As his eyes were no longer on the road in front of him, he lost situational awareness as to his position on the road and crossed the centerline into oncoming traffic.

At this point, the Airman had no control of the 2,000-pound "missile" flying down the wrong side of the road. The car narrowly missed a

full sized sport utility vehicle. The next vehicle wasn't as lucky.

The Airman and his passengers came face to face with an ambulance. When two vehicles collide at 55 mph — especially when one vehicle is much bigger than the other — the outcome is never good. Both vehicles flipped after the collision, leaving a trail of debris and fluids on the road before finally skidding to a halt.

Medics arrived on scene and began triaging the injured. The ambulance operator and his passenger were extricated and taken to a local hospital with only minor injuries.

The Airman and his passengers were not as lucky.

The impact with the ambulance crushed the driver side compartment, killing the Airman and the passenger directly

"The impact with the ambulance crushed the driver side compartment, killing the Airman and the passenger directly behind him instantly."

behind him instantly. The front-seat passenger, who suffered severe internal and external injuries, was removed from the wreckage and taken to a local hospital where he eventually succumbed to those injuries. The backseat passenger side occupant suffered only minor lower extremity injuries.

It's amazing how quickly a seemingly routine road trip with friends can turn to tragedy.

The Airman, prior to leaving his duty station, sat down with his supervisor and was given a traffic safety brief. The supervisor covered driving defensively, cell phone use, as well as drinking and driving. I cannot speak to the thought process of the young Airman, but he may have thought he was doing everything

right, because he was not talking on his cell phone while driving. But using a cell phone as a GPS while driving has its own set of risks.

So where could the mishap chain have been broken?

The use of the cell phone is the first part of the chain that if broken would have prevented the crash. Driving a car requires multi-tasking, and any distraction can take away from your ability to operate a vehicle effectively. The second opportunity to break the chain was maintaining situational awareness by the driver and his passengers. The driver has ultimate responsibility for the safety of those in the vehicle with him as well as those operating vehicles around him. Granted there were three passengers in the vehicle, and each of them had a responsibility to speak up as the vehicle began drifting into oncoming traffic, but the burden of operating a vehicle safely rests with the driver. If either of these links in the chain had been disrupted, the event never would have happened.

Why do people feel the need to use their cell phone or adjust their GPS system or CD player while driving? What could be so urgent that they let themselves get distracted and put their lives on the line? It's an epidemic; everybody from Granny to the new driver is using electronic devices while driving in some form or fashion. You see it all the time.

Why do passengers in a vehicle just sit back and go along for the ride? I'm not saying be an armchair quarterback or backseat driver; but if you see something wrong, step in and call a "knock it off." Your life is on the line too.

The Air Force lost a valuable team member that day. Worse still, family members lost a son or brother. And what's most disheartening? It was 100 percent preventable. ✚

Sergeant Caudill is the ground safety manager for the 12th Flying Training Wing at NAS Pensacola, Fla.





ALTERNATE ENDINGS

Many will set out for a fun day of sledding, tobogganing or tubing this winter, but end up in an emergency room. Discover what could save you time, money and ... pain

By **TIM BARELA**

Photos by Tech. Sgt. **SAMUEL BENDET**

Sledding, tobogganing and tubing down a snow-covered hill is supposed to be fun, and in most cases, it is. But for some people, who add more risk to the activity than they should, the pleasure can quickly turn to pain.

In January a 46-year-old man from Staten Island, N.Y., decided to celebrate a New York Jets victory over the archrival New England Patriots by sledding down his steep driveway. But a sport utility vehicle struck and killed him as he slid onto the street directly in the vehicle's path. Then in February, a 20-year-old mom from Moore, Okla., died from injuries she received after being thrown from a sled that was being pulled by a pick-up truck.



The pad hit a patch of grass and slush that caused it to quickly decelerate, and the Airman was ejected from it. He tumbled and slid another 75 feet before hitting a concrete retaining wall, knocking him unconscious.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were 160,000 sledding, tubing and tobogganing-related injuries treated at hospital emergency rooms, doctors' offices and clinics nationwide in 2007 (the most recent statistics available). That's up from 74,000 in 2004. Sledding injuries often include facial lacerations or skull fractures; tobogganing injuries almost always involve the lower half of the body, the commission reported. While children under 14 are most at-risk for these injuries, adults also take a beating.

"A lot of people just don't view sledding as a dangerous activity so they let their guard down," said Dave Etrheim, Air Education and Training Command Ground Safety Division. "They know they can break a leg or crash into a tree while skiing or snowboarding, but they feel relatively safe sledding and tobogganing. The reality is it can be very dangerous when people don't respect the risks the activity presents."

Below are examples of some Airmen who found this out the hard way:

CRASHING INTO CONCRETE BARRIER: While vacationing at a ski resort in La Plagne, France, a 20-year-old airman first class and three of his friends went out for a few drinks at a local club. On the way to another club at 1 a.m., they decided it would be a good idea to sled down a beginners' ski slope adjacent to their hotel. The surface of this slope had become icy because the nighttime temperature had decreased.

Since they didn't have a sled, they commandeered a 3-by-6-foot protective padding from a ski lift support pole. They laid the 4-inch thick pad flat on the snow-covered slope and jumped onto it. The pad quickly picked up speed because of the icy conditions. The four men traveled about 100 feet when they hit a service road that sent them airborne for about 10 feet. When they hit the ground, the Airman's friends jumped off the pad because it was moving too fast. The Airman, however, hung on and continued down the slope.

The pad hit a patch of grass and slush that caused it to quickly decelerate, and the Airman was ejected from it. He tumbled and slid another 75 feet before hitting a concrete retaining wall, knocking him unconscious. He suffered a serious head/brain injury, as well as a fractured pelvis, jaw and hand. He spent the next 40 days in the hospital, and the injury cost \$18,640.

COLLIDING WITH A TELEPHONE POLE: A 23-year-old airman first class and several friends from work were snow tubing down a hill from the west side of Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The hill had not been established as an authorized hill to tube down. At the bottom of the hill was a telephone pole. Halfway down the hill, the Airman started to veer in the direction of the pole. He struck the pole, fracturing his upper right arm and ribs. He spent six days in the hospital, 24 days on quarters and racked up \$11,796 in medical bills.





HITTING A ROCK: A 20-year-old airman first class decided to go tobogganing at a gravel pit on the north side of Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. On his last trip down the hill, he struck a large snow-covered rock that launched him nearly 4 feet into the air and shattered the sled. He landed hard on his upper leg and hip, fracturing the upper left femur near the hip joint. He spent 17 days in the hospital and 49 days on quarters. His injuries cost a whopping \$26,297.

STRIKING A TREE: A 21-year-old senior airman was sledding down a hill on a tube near Kingsley Field Air National Guard Base in Oregon. He lost control and struck a tree with his left leg, resulting in a fracture of his left femur. He spent five days in the hospital and 20 days on quarters. The injury cost \$9,830.

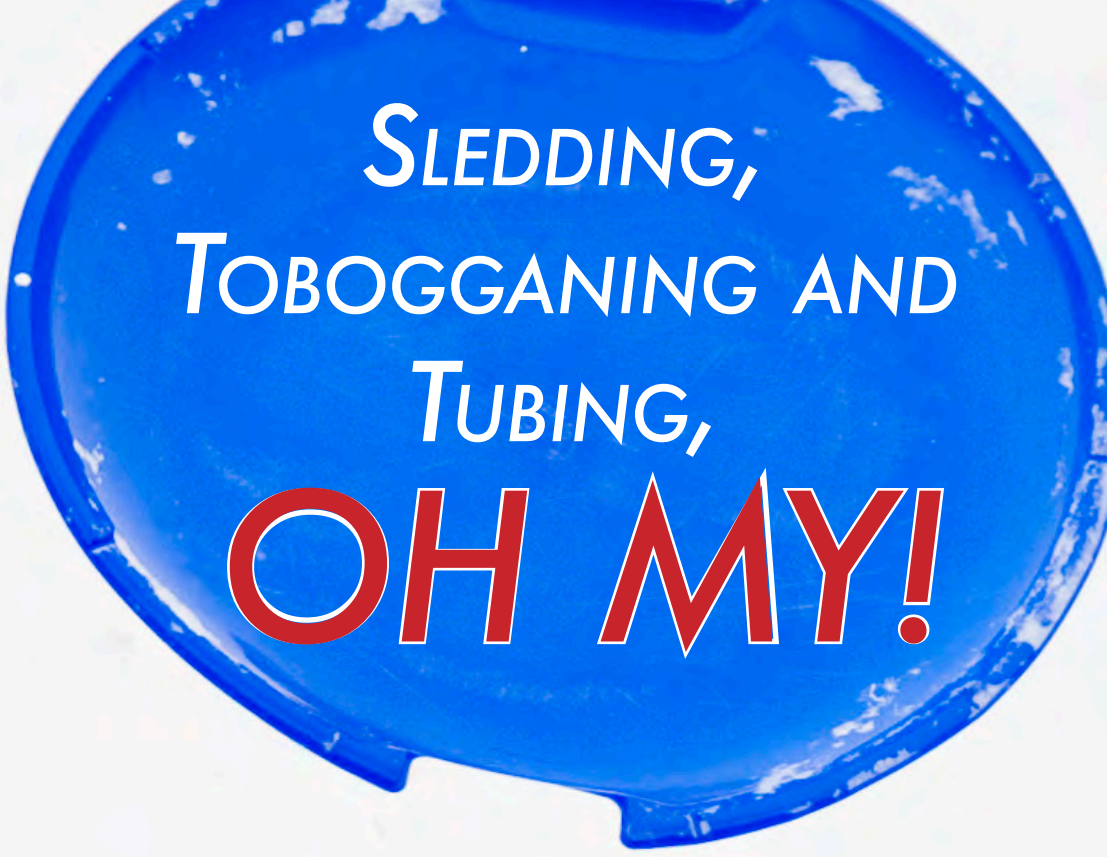
COMING FACE-TO-FACE WITH A THORN BUSH: A 23-year-old senior airman joined some friends on a sledding trip at a ski resort near Kirtland AFB, N.M. During one run, the Airman lay flat on his stomach on the sled, taking him downhill headfirst. As he picked up speed, he began to veer off course and crashed into a thorn bush halfway down the slope. The right side of his face struck the bush, causing cuts and scratches to his head, face and neck, and lodging a thorn into his tear duct. Fortunately, his prescription glasses deflected the sharp thorns away from the center of his eye. He spent two days in the hospital to surgically repair the duct, then another 10 days on quarters. The injury cost \$3,750.

ENDURING A STUMP TO THE RUMP: A 21-year-old airman first class from Charleston AFB, S.C., was on leave in Massachusetts when he went to a park with his family to go sledding. On his way down a 40-foot hill, the Airman hit a tree stump that was about 6 inches high and 2 inches wide and covered by snow. The stump tore through the plastic sled, and made contact with the Airman's posterior, causing a deep laceration. He was hospitalized for four days, and the injury ran up a tab of \$1,864.

TAKING A SLED TO THE HEAD: A 20-year-old airman first class went to a frozen lake near Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, to ride sleds pulled by snowmobiles. The plastic sleds were designed to be towed at speeds from 10 to 15 mph. The driver, however, sped up to approximately 35 mph with three sleds in tow. The Airman was on the first sled. When the driver made a sharp turn, it caused the sleds to flip over. The Airman got her shoulder tangled with the sled and was dragged several feet before coming to a stop. When the driver stopped the snowmobile, one of the riderless sleds continued sliding and struck the Airman in the back of the head. Initially the Airman could not get up and lay face-down in the snow. Later she lost feeling in her arm and could not hold her head up because of severe pain in her neck. She had suffered a concussion and a strained neck, was placed on quarters for two days and given restricted duty for seven days. The injuries cost \$1,590. ❖

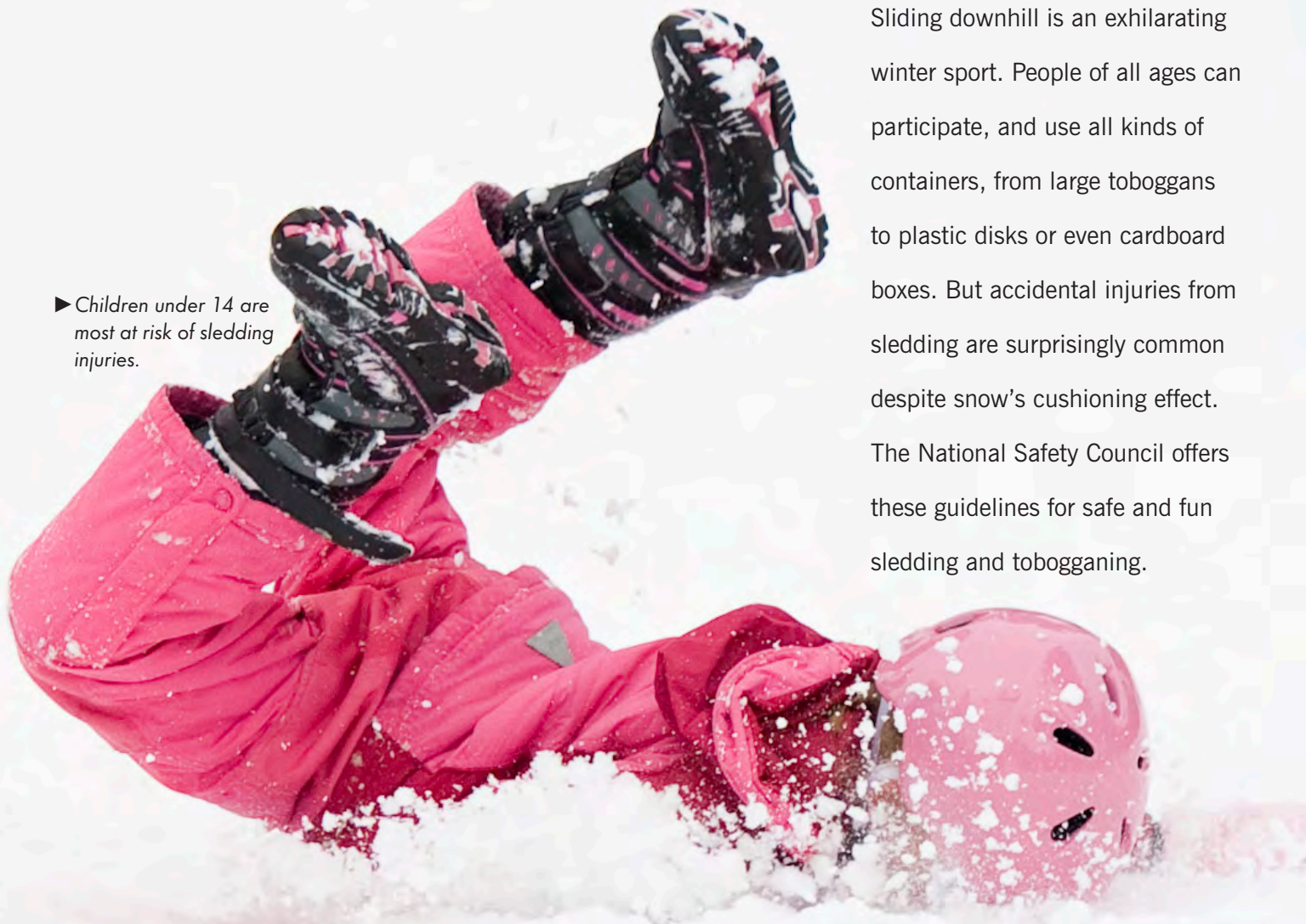
He began to veer off course and crashed into a thorn bush halfway down the slope. The right side of his face struck the bush, causing cuts and scratches to his head, face and neck, and lodging a thorn into his tear duct.





SLEDDING, TOBOGGANING AND TUBING, OH MY!

► Children under 14 are most at risk of sledding injuries.



Sliding downhill is an exhilarating winter sport. People of all ages can participate, and use all kinds of containers, from large toboggans to plastic disks or even cardboard boxes. But accidental injuries from sledding are surprisingly common despite snow's cushioning effect. The National Safety Council offers these guidelines for safe and fun sledding and tobogganing.



► Sledding headfirst increases the risk of head and neck injuries and should be avoided.



► Going out of control and hitting objects are the main contributors to sledding injuries.



► Doubling up increases the chance of injury, as limbs can get tangled and heads can slam together.

❄ Keep all equipment in good condition. Broken parts, sharp edges, cracks and split wood invite injuries.

❄ Sled on spacious, gently sloping hills, which have a level run-off at the end so that the sled can come to a halt safely. Avoid steep slopes and slopes located near streets and roadways.

❄ Check slopes for bare spots, holes and other obstructions which might cause injury. Bypass these areas or wait until conditions are better.

❄ The proper position for sledding is to sit or lay on your back on the top of the sled with your feet pointing downhill. Sledding headfirst increases the risk of head and neck injuries and should be avoided.

❄ Ensure the sledding path does not cross traffic and is free from hazards such as large trees, fences, rocks or telephone poles.

❄ Do not sled on or around frozen lakes, streams or ponds because the ice may be unstable.

❄ Dress warm enough for conditions. Sledgers should wear thick gloves or mittens and protective boots to protect against frostbite as well as potential injury.



THREE-LEGGED RACE

IN THE T-6 TEXAN II

Instructor pilot, student make amazing
landing in broken aircraft

By **TIM BARELA**

Photo by Tech. Sgt. **SAMUEL BENDET**





When the flight controls malfunctioned on their T-6 Texan II, an instructor pilot and his student had to figure out a way to land the plane safely back home at Sheppard AFB, Texas. The pilot had only been an instructor for a little over a month, while the student pilot had never even flown solo.

Capt. Frank Baumann was in a three-legged race of sorts. But if he and his partner didn't work in concert, the consequences would be far greater than falling down and scraping a knee. They could crash a multi-million dollar aircraft and be ripped apart in the wreckage.

Their "race" started 13,000 feet in the air, and the thing that "tethered" them together were the broken flight controls in a T-6 Texan II.

On Sept. 13, Baumann, an instructor pilot with the 459th Flying Training Squadron at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, and student pilot 2nd Lt. Derek Olivares had to land a T-6 that neither of them had full control over. A flight control malfunction left Baumann with control of the ailerons, which determine the right and left motion of the plane, and Olivares with control of the elevators, which manipulate the up and down motion. Usually only one pilot controls the plane.

Complicating matters, until just a couple of months ago, Baumann had been flying B-52 Bombers out of Barksdale AFB, La. The 36-year-old Fort Still, Okla., native had only been an instructor pilot for a little more than a month. While he had 1,000 flying hours, less than 200 of those had come in the T-6. And the 23-year-old Olivares had even less time in the T-6, or any aircraft for that matter. He had yet to fly solo.

Talk about flying by the seat of your pants!

Earlier that day, the duo had taken off as a standard T-6 sortie to train on spins, basic aircraft control and landings. But when the aircraft in-flight emergency occurred, the flight became a fight to bring the plane — and themselves — home safely.

Olivares, a Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training student pilot, discovered the flight control problem during recovery from a practice spin maneuver. The Harrison Township, Mich., native said he knew something was wrong when he felt the control stick jump during the spin. His first thought was that Baumann had assumed control of the aircraft, as it felt as though they were fighting over the stick. But Baumann reaffirmed that the student did have full control of the plane.

"When I looked at the flight instruments, they were indicating a left bank even though I had full deflection of the control stick to the right," Olivares said. "That's when I told Captain Baumann there was something wrong with the controls."

Baumann immediately assumed control of the T-6.

"Imagine driving your car down the street and making a right-hand turn, but the car goes left," Baumann said. "Your reaction is to desperately turn the wheel even harder, and you



By Tech Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

might do that until you crash because it's disorienting. That's kind of the situation we faced but in an aircraft."

When the instructor pilot took over, the first thing he noticed was that the flight controls seemed real sloppy.

"It was really strange, and I was not able to process what was happening at first," he said.

After a few minutes he figured out that he did not have control of the elevator, which hindered their ability to climb and descend. He still managed to stabilize the aircraft by controlling the banking motions with the ailerons and using the trim to make minor stabilizing adjustments to the elevator inputs.

After recovering to level flight, the hair raised on the back of Baumann's neck as he realized the severity of their plight. Without the elevator, they appeared to be headed for an ejection.

"The T-6 has an awesome ejection seat, but so many things can go wrong in a bail out," the instructor said. "So I'd rather not test it."

His main concern was for the safety of his student. He told Olivares to double check all his gear in preparation for an ejection.

"I was really concerned that on one of his first rides that he was all set up because it looked like we were probably going to have to bail out of the airplane," Baumann said. "Even if an ejection works perfectly, it's pretty violent so you want to be strapped in properly. If something is not lined up right, you can get badly injured."

Olivares followed his mentor's advice.

"I checked my harness about three times to make sure that everything was tight and good to go," the student pilot said.

The duo also began troubleshooting the problem.

"I was a fairly new instructor pilot, so I didn't assume to know everything," Baumann said. "It might well be a common malfunction with a simple fix. So I asked Derek to go through the checklist in search of an emergency procedure that lined up with what was occurring."

Baumann reported the in-flight emergency to the supervisor of flying, who directed him to the T-6 operations supervisor, Maj. Gary Greicar.

Greicar immediately gathered an expert think tank of wing leadership, safety and maintenance personnel to help come up with a plan.

"The people on the ground were acting like another crew

"Imagine driving your car down the street and making a right-hand turn, but the car goes left. Your reaction is to desperately turn the wheel even harder, and you might do that until you crash because it's disorienting. That's kind of the situation we faced but in an aircraft."

member,” Greicar said. “Our job was to support the pilots with ideas and solutions to safely recover the aircraft.”

At first, the ground team came to the same conclusion as Baumann: Without control of the elevators, the plane would be impossible to land. With that in mind, Greicar offered to read the controlled bailout checklist to the pilots as they had their hands full maintaining level flight with a broken airplane.

About that time a chase-ship support aircraft piloted by Capt. Wade Maulsby, 459th FTS instructor pilot, joined up with the stricken aircraft to provide assistance and perform an exterior inspection. The wingman searched for anything unusual.

“He looked over our plane and saw the elevator and trim appeared to be intact,” Baumann said.

Maulsby recommended having Olivares check to see if he had control over the elevators. That’s when they discovered the student pilot could, indeed, control the elevators. But their troubles certainly weren’t over at that point.

“I still had zero control over the elevators, and Derek had zero control over the ailerons,” Baumann said.

If they were going to safely land the plane, it was going to take an unorthodox approach with both of them working as one.

“Once we had full comprehension of our situation, we discussed our options,” Baumann said. “Leadership left it up to me to decide if we bail out or try to land the crippled aircraft. But I was glad to get everybody’s input; because if I was about to do something stupid, I wanted to know about it.”

Ultimately, he concluded it was safer to attempt the risky landing, versus an even riskier ejection.

The pilot and his student practiced a half dozen simulated landings in the airspace before even thinking about touching earth.

“I controlled the ailerons, rudder and throttle; he controlled the elevators as I gave him verbal commands,” Baumann said.

They reviewed contingency plans and thought through worst-case scenarios while practicing the landing.

“We didn’t know what else might be broken on the aircraft, so we had to prepare solutions in case other things went wrong,” Baumann said. “And ejecting remained a last-resort option if we decided things just weren’t working out.”

Racing against the clock while facing decreasing fuel and deteriorating visibility, the crew flew a straight-in approach on a 12,000-foot runway. One misstep here could spell disaster.

“We actually settled the aircraft onto the ground

rather smoothly,” Baumann said. “It was a pretty nice landing.”

His student pilot couldn’t have been happier.

“There was lots of celebration and relief when the aircraft was safely on the ground,” Olivares said. “We were all excited ... it was an awesome feeling.”

A post flight maintenance investigation revealed that a critical component of the flight control system failed, causing the control sticks in the front and rear cockpits to function independently rather than in unison as would normally be the case. As a result of the mishap, the T-6 fleet of 446 aircraft across all Air

Education and Training Command bases went through a 100 percent maintenance inspection before returning to flying operations.

Baumann attributed the triumphant flight to communication, training and crew resource management.

“Having a smart wingman and the support and experience on the ground were the main contributors to our success,” he said. “It was the

whole crew concept. We were getting information from a lot of different sources, and it was important to take advice and find the crucial info that was applicable to us.”

But Baumann was especially happy with whom he “ran that three-legged race”: his student pilot.

“Derek remained completely calm throughout the emergency,” Baumann said. “Some students would have frozen up in a situation like that and been almost useless. To his credit, he stayed focused and never panicked even once.” ✪

“Derek remained completely calm throughout the emergency. Some students would have frozen up in a situation like that and been almost useless.”

Second Lt. Sara Harper, 82nd Training Wing Public Affairs, Sheppard AFB, Texas, contributed to this article.



After landing their stricken T-6 Sept. 13 at Sheppard AFB, Capt. Frank Baumann (left), 459th Flying Training Squadron instructor pilot, and 2nd Lt. Derek Olivares, Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training student pilot, pose for a photo.

Air Force photo

MORE THAN ONE BRAIN TO FLY THE PLANE

By Lt. Col. **RICH DOYLE**

Photo by Staff Sgt. **SAMUEL BENDET**

In our September/October 2011 edition of Torch, we printed an article on a T-38 Talon mishap in which a fatigued pilot made some errors that led to a costly crash landing. But what concerned me most about what investigators discovered while putting together their accident report was a “culture of risk tolerance” they cited in the pilot’s squadron.

Investigators said, “Inappropriate supervisory policy, combined with inadequate operational risk management, led to the mishap pilot flying a high-risk mission profile. ... This mishap was caused by the authorization and execution of a mission having an unnecessarily high level of risk relative to the real benefits.”

How does something like this happen? It takes more than one person letting their guard down, making poor decisions or simply looking the other way.

While flying squadrons usually have an assigned flight safety officer, really every person and office within the squadron is a flight safety officer. I know it is cliché, but let me explain.

SQUADRON COMMANDERS: They are the primary enforcers of safety. Their attitude and approach to safety permeates all squadron activities. If they play fast and loose with the rules, so does everyone else. If they look the other way, so will everyone else. If they demand strict adherence to Air Force Instructions and apply sound operational risk management, they set the standard for their personnel. They must recognize ineffective and unsafe behavior

and act to change that behavior, even when it is unpopular to do so.

FLIGHT COMMANDERS: They should know their people — their limitations, qualifications, experience level, currency and any personal issues that may significantly impact their performance. All these factors should be reflected in the daily and weekly flying schedule, as well as the deployment cycle planning.

TRAINING FLIGHTS: These flights or offices are responsible for translating training requirements outlined in Air Force Instruction 11-2X, Volume 1 into local training plans. Costs, risks and benefits are analyzed and weighed at the higher headquarters level, and it is up to the training office to implement and document a coherent program with assets available at the unit level; i.e. academics, simulators, aircraft sorties, exercises, etc. After qualifications are attained, they have to be maintained and tracked. This can be a tedious task and usually has to be tailored to individual crewmembers based on their skill level in a variety of tasks. All of the training events have one goal in mind: proficient aircrews able to accomplish their mission safely. If aircrews are not proficient, they are probably not safe.

STANDARDIZATION AND EVALUATION FLIGHTS: These evaluators are enforcers of performance standards and, by extension, safety. AFI 11-2X, Volume 2 dictates proficiency levels for various maneuvers. Those proficiency levels are determined by higher

A T-38 Talon crash landed at Ellington Field, Texas, Feb. 11. Investigators said a “culture of risk tolerance” in the flying squadron helped lead to the mishap, which ended up costing \$2.1 million.



headquarters and based on mission requirements and safety of flight. If aircrew members do not perform to standards on a check ride, they fail and get sent back to their flight commander and training flight for remedial training then reevaluation. This process results in a more proficient and thus safer aircrew member.

INTEL, WEAPONS AND TACTICS: These disciplines are inter-related. Squadron intel specialists are well-versed in the type of missions these aircrews will fly. They brief targets, threats, special instructions, rules of engagement, and SERE (survival evasion resistance escape) considerations, among other things. You have to know this stuff to be safe and effective. The weapons and tactics officer will take over and teach/brief how to employ the aircraft to counter these threats, stay safe and execute the mission.

SCHEDULING: The mission, whether training or operational, does not happen without being scheduled. This is another tedious task that takes into account mission requirements, aircrew availability to include duty day/crew rest, aircrew qualifications, aircraft availability, weather attrition, day/night windows, higher headquarter taskings, etc. The process puts qualified and current aircrew in mission-capable aircraft to get the mission done in a safe, efficient and effective manner.

SQUADRON AVIATION RESOURCE MANAGERS: These managers develop products that flight commanders and schedulers use to start the scheduling process to begin with: qualifications, currencies, semi-annual training requirements, etc. Along with the operations officer, they review the proposed schedule the day prior, ensuring aircrew are qualified to fly their assigned/scheduled mission. They also ensure aircrew are up to date on flight crew information

files, safety read files and boldface, etc. Most of the data squadron aviation resource managers process has to do with safety.

OPERATIONS SUPERVISION: The operations supervisor is basically the squadron commander's real time representative during flying operations. Their primary job is safe execution of the mission, which at this stage of the game is really the schedule. Their job is bit more holistic than others; they track weather, maintenance issues, traffic flow, patterns, operations, the military operating area, range considerations, target status, emergencies, etc. If all goes as scheduled, their job is easy; but flying is a dynamic enterprise with variables that often require an experienced aviator to weigh-in, set right and ensure safety.

LIFE SUPPORT: They ensure aircrew egress, survival equipment and training is adequate and up to date. This is serious business when you consider the fact that when aircrews use this equipment and training for real, it's their only means of survival!

FLIGHT SAFETY OFFICER:

So what's left for a flight safety officer to do? ... Ideally, nothing. Everything a flying squadron does should be aimed at safe, efficient and effective flying

operations. If the squadron flights and offices perform their jobs, they are essentially working as flight safety officers. But things don't always go as planned, and that is where the squadron FSO can help the commander find and fill in the gaps.

The bottom line is everyone in a flying squadron is a flight safety officer, and any one person in that chain can be the difference between a successful flight and a disastrous one.

Colonel Doyle is Air Education and Training Command's flight safety chief and a T-6 Texan II instructor pilot at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

“If (squadron commanders) play fast and loose with the rules, so does everyone else. If they look the other way, so will everyone else.”



NEW COMBAT KING ARRIVES AT KIRTLAND



Courtesy photos

A new HC-130J Combat King II takes off from the Lockheed Martin facility in Marietta, Ga., Sept. 29. The new aircraft was delivered to the 58th Special Operations Wing at Kirtland AFB, N.M.

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — A new HC-130J Combat King II personnel recovery aircraft arrived Sept. 29 at Kirtland Air Force Base as the first of a fleet of seven HC/MC-130Js that will be assigned here over the next few years.

The HC-130J replaces the HC-130P/Ns as the only dedicated fixed-wing personnel recovery platform in the Air Force inventory. It has an extended range, and its mission is to rapidly deploy to execute recovery operations to austere airfields and denied territory for expeditionary, all-weather personnel recovery operations.

The aircraft was flown from Marietta, Ga., by Maj. Gen. Mark Solo, 19th Air Force commander, and Lt. Col. Nick Gismondi, commander of the recently re-activated 415th Special Operations Squadron here. During a ceremony commemorating the arrival of the aircraft, Col. James Cardoso, 58th Special Operations Wing commander, spoke to guests.

“The significance of this aircraft arriving here continues a tradition of excellence at the 58 SOW,” Cardoso said. “It has state-of-the-art capabilities and will enhance our training and readiness.”

Cardoso also spoke about how the aircraft would provide a modernized, long-term training environment and also help execute a comprehensive and synchronized training environment not only for the personnel recovery community, but also for the CV-22 and HH-60 crews during air refueling operations.

“Team Kirtland, most notably the 377th Air Base Wing, provides outstanding support in these absolutely crucial facets that enable flying wings to (safely) launch their aircraft night after night,”



Courtesy photo

Maj. Gen. Mark Solo, 19th Air Force commander, prepares to fly the Air Force’s newest HC-130J Combat King II from the Lockheed Martin facility in Marietta, Ga., to Kirtland AFB Sept. 29.

Cardoso said. “Even as we celebrate the arrival of a new and incredible machine, we must never forget what makes New Mexico, Albuquerque, Kirtland and the 58th Special Operations Wing great is not the iron of the machine, but the iron of the people.”

The enhancements in this aircraft include advanced multispectral sensors, modernized refueling systems, a fully functional combat systems operator crew station, enhanced cargo handling and a well-defined growth path to even greater combat capability, Gismondi said. The HC-130J is considered a completely different aircraft from previous versions, with a qualification process for aircrew taking about eight months.

“Team Kirtland will now employ these new aircraft to train mission-ready personnel recovery and special operations aircrews,” Gismondi said. “These quieter, more fuel-efficient and reduced-emissions aircraft will be linked to a newly built state-of-the-art training environment, incorporating immersive computer-aided instructional methodology and aircraft simulators, all designed to provide agile and effective training operations to our warfighting customers.”

The new HC-130J is the first of the new aircraft coming to the 58th SOW, Cardoso said. An MC-130J Combat Shadow II, the special operations version, arrived in early October. Two more aircraft are scheduled to arrive in 2012 and one each year until 2015, for a total of seven HC/MC-130Js.

— Stefan Bocchino
377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

INVESTIGATORS CRACK CASE OF AIRCRAFT CRASH THAT KILLED FAMILY OF 13

Nearly two and a half years after they began their investigation into a plane crash that killed 13 members of a family bound for a Montana ski resort, National Transportation Safety Board officials say they have cracked the case.

In July the board announced that the cause of the March 2009 deadly crash of the Pilatus PC-12 aircraft was a series of operational errors made by the pilot, 65-year-old Ellison Summerfield, who also died in the crash.

According to the report, the pilot failed to ensure that a fuel system icing inhibitor was added to the fuel prior to the mishap flight, which ultimately led to ice blocking fuel in the left wing. The pilot also failed to take appropriate remedial actions, including diverting to a suitable airport, after the airplane warning systems indicated a low-fuel pressure state that ultimately resulted in a significant lateral fuel imbalance. And, the pilot lost control while maneuvering the left-wing-heavy airplane near the approach end of the runway.

"The pilot's pattern of poor decision making set in motion a series of events that culminated in the deadly crash," said NTSB Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman. "Humans will make mistakes, but that is why following procedures, using checklists and always ensuring that a safety margin exists are so essential — aviation is not forgiving when it comes to errors."

On March 22, 2009, at about 2:32 p.m., the Pilatus airplane crashed about 2,100 feet west of runway 33 at Bert Mooney Airport in Butte, Mont. The flight departed Oroville Municipal Airport in Oroville, Calif., en route to Gallatin Field in Bozeman, Mont., but the pilot diverted to Butte for unknown reasons. The pilot and the 13 passengers, who were related to aircraft owner Irving Feldcamp, were fatally injured, and the aircraft was substantially damaged by impact forces and a post-crash fire.



Officials investigate the scene of a fatal plane crash outside the Butte Airport in Montana on March 22, 2009.

By Michael Albers

The Pilatus flight manual states that a fuel system icing inhibitor must be used for all flight operations in ambient temperatures below 0 degrees Celsius to prevent ice formation in the fuel system, investigators said. The board concluded that the airplane experienced icing in the fuel system which resulted in a left-wing-heavy fuel imbalance.

The increasing fuel level in the left tank and the depletion of the fuel from the right tank should have been apparent to the pilot because that information was presented on the fuel quantity indicator, investigators said. This should have prompted the pilot to divert the airplane to an airport earlier in the flight as specified by the airplane manufacturer.

"If the pilot had diverted earlier in the flight to one of several suitable airports along the airplane's route of flight, the outcome of this flight would likely have been different because the airplane would have had a less severe fuel imbalance and the pilot would not have had to contend with the airplane's deteriorating performance as the imbalance steadily progressed," the report said.

While investigators say they don't believe it directly affected the outcome of the crash, they noted that the PC-12 is only equipped to carry nine passengers. That means it was transporting four more people than should have been allowed — just another example of the pilot bending the rules. Investigators also said at least four of the seven children on board the airplane were not restrained or were improperly restrained.

Because there was no crash-proof flight recorder in the aircraft, it took longer for investigators to discover what happened. They were able to salvage some tiny microchips from the plane's heavily damaged safety-warning system. Information from those microchips helped them solve the case.

BOUQUET OF FLOWERS CAUSE PLANE CRASH

When it comes to flying aircraft, it only takes a moment of letting your guard down for a flight to end in disaster. Take the case of the aircraft taken out by a wedding bouquet two years ago in Tuscany, Italy.

A bride and groom who planned to add a creative touch to the flower bouquet-throwing tradition inadvertently caused a plane to crash, according to British Broadcasting Corporation reports.

The pair had hired an ultra-light plane to fly past the women attendees and throw the flowers to them at Montioni Park in Suvereto, near Livorno in western Tuscany. Instead, the plane's engine sucked the flowers up and

subsequently caught on fire and exploded. As horrified wedding guests looked on, the aircraft crashed into woods close to a youth hostel where 50 children were staying.

None of the people inside the hostel was hurt. Aircraft passenger Isidoro Pensieri, however, suffered serious head and facial injuries, as well as two broken legs. The 44-year-old victim was the one who threw the bouquet out of the plane. The pilot, 61 year-old Luciano Nannelli, escaped without serious injury.

Fortunately, the bride and groom were not aboard the aircraft.

— From wire reports

