

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

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- **Distracted Driving**
- **Water on a Desert Ride**
- **Track Day**

WINNER

2004

APEX

AWARDS FOR
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Park It



If You Pour.

Even a little alcohol can affect your judgment, balance and coordination. The fact is, almost half of the riders who die in solo motorcycle crashes have been drinking.

Play it safe. Don't start drinking until you've finished riding.



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Distracted Driving



Jessica Huang
Temple City High School, Temple City
2004 AAA National High School Communication Program



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Public Affairs

JOHN COCHRAN
Managing Editor

As

As a teen driver, I was on the receiving end of another driver's distraction. There I was, leisurely cruising to school one morning in my second-hand Honda Civic, minding my own business and watching the road ahead. In the opposite lane was a huge American-made sedan—nothing wrong with that, as long as I didn't have to buy gas for it. As our cars approached the same stretch of road—BAM!—the other driver suddenly made an abrupt left turn into my car.

When we got out to survey the damage, I recognized him from school. He was a few years older than I was, and several orders of magnitude larger and more physically imposing. I was 5 feet 10 inches, and weighed maybe 150 pounds soaking wet with a pocketful of nickels. I couldn't scare a kitten away from a saucer of milk. This guy had to be 6 feet 4 inches and 240 pounds. Better yet, he was home on leave from the Marine Corps.

Great—I'm in a fender-bender with a gigantic, trained killer, and now he's ticked off! I started thinking of polite ways to convey to him the idea that although I didn't look like much, I may yet amount to something, and that his pummeling me into oblivion, although satisfying for him, would not be the ideal outcome for me.

Fortunately, the menace and mayhem I'd dreaded didn't materialize. Nobody was hurt in the crash, and the other driver couldn't have been nicer or more apologetic. Whew! I was shaken up, but I'd live to enjoy another day of higher learning. Something in his car—maybe his girlfriend—had distracted him just before the collision.

Distracted driving has become more common since then, because of the popularity of cell phones, laptops, drive-through burger joints, CDs, and all the other things drivers get involved with.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports some eye-opening facts on distracted driving. More than 40,000 people die in motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. each year, and driver distraction is a factor in 20 to 30 percent of all automobile crashes. Falling asleep while driving causes 100,000 crashes, 40,000 injuries, and 1550 deaths every year. Something as simple as tuning your radio or glancing away from the road can cause an accident. Carelessness and inattention cause more crashes than anything else. A recent NHTSA survey found that nearly 75 percent of drivers reported using their phone while driving, and an estimated 60 percent of cell phone use takes place behind the wheel.

The National Safety Council recommends these steps:

- Pay attention to the road when driving. It only takes a second for an accident to happen.
- Don't slow down to gawk at a crash or other roadside activity.
- Don't reach behind you, pick things up off the floor, open the glove box, clean the windows, or perform personal grooming while driving.
- Don't drive if you're tired. Don't daydream. Share the driving duties with a partner on long trips.
- Don't talk on your cell phone while driving. Wait until you arrive at your destination, or pull over to the side of the road before starting a cell phone conversation. ■

MSGT "DOC" MOSS
USAF Retired

My friend Don came to Las Vegas for a visit recently, and while he was here, he decided to rent a motorcycle. Although Don is an experienced rider, his riding time is limited for two important reasons; first, he is from Alaska, and second, he lives on a small island.

Riding in the "lower 48" always excites him, as he has an opportunity to ride motorcycles for many more miles than he usually has time. However, coming to Las Vegas in August may not be what he expected.

I planned a route that would take us out of Las Vegas and completely around Mt. Charleston, our 12,000-foot mountain, northwest of the city. I figured that by going north, we could take in a beautiful alpine ride once we left the desert heat. Riding to the top of Kyle Canyon and Lee Canyon is always fun on a motorcycle. Moreover, at 8500 feet, the air is cool and crisp, and

makes for perfect riding conditions.

After leaving the mountain, we headed north, past the Nevada Test Site and then west toward Pahrump, where we met a few friends. They were going to Shoshone, California, a favorite stopping point for motorcycle riders on the way to Death Valley National Park, so we decided to tag along.

When we arrived at Shoshone, Don looked a bit pale and seemed disoriented. Being an experienced desert rider and a motorcycle safety instructor, I knew to drink plenty of water at every stop. But I didn't pay any attention to Don's intake. After all, he was an experienced rider and should know to drink water. I asked him if he was all right, and he assured me he was. I noticed that he was drinking iced tea; I asked him how much water he drank since we left Las Vegas. His answer stunned me: "None."

After 250 miles of desert riding, his entire intake of liquid was iced tea.

Don was badly dehydrated. Between the lack of oxygen in his system from when we were in the mountains, to riding across the 110-degree desert, moisture was being sucked out of him faster than it was coming in. Luckily, I noticed his condition when we were stopped, rather than after a crash caused by his lack of water.

Tea, while seemingly refreshing, is loaded with caffeine, and caffeine will quickly dehydrate a person. The same holds true for the sugars in soft drinks. And alcohol—well, I hope everyone is smart enough not to drink and ride.

After a few hours in an air-conditioned restaurant, and drinking about a gallon of water, Don was ready to ride home.

To help prevent others from making what could be a fatal error, let me recommend some tips for desert riding on a motorcycle:

- Drink water, and a lot of it. If you feel thirsty, you're down two quarts.
- Avoid tea, coffee, soda, and alcohol. Water is life's blood.
- Always ride with a partner and

check each other out. **The desert is no place to go riding alone.**

- Wear long sleeves. Besides being a DOD requirement, keeping the sun off your skin will help keep you cool. Sunburned arms hurt and use more moisture as your body tries to compensate for the damage.

- Use sunscreen on all exposed skin (which should be minimal).

- Stop often to rest and re-hydrate (see first tip).

- Avoid the hottest part of the day. Stop in a restaurant for an extended lunch. Sometimes, the fastest way to get home is to stop for a few hours.

- Carry towels that can be drenched in water to cool you down.

- Carry a cell phone, but remember there are dead zones in the desert.

- Know your limits and the limits of those riding with you. Remember, us desert rats have become accustomed to the climate. Sure, "it's a dry heat," but it's also dry in an oven.

- Drink water, and a lot of it (didn't I already mention that?).

Remember, you can also dehydrate in the winter. Water is life's blood, so drink up. ■

Water On A Desert Ride



KEN RYDER

Air Force Veteran
JT3/Unisys Support Contractor
Edwards AFB CA

The light turns green and I go for it. I wind through first gear in a flash, grab second gear, the front wheel lifts from the ground slightly as the motor begins to scream at 15,000 rpms, I grab third gear and realize I'm doing over 100 mph when I get to the apex of my first turn. What a rush! The best part of this is that there are no cars, no cops, no stoplights, a clean road, and I'm free to go fast. Canyon back roads? HARDLY! I'm not breaking the law and I'm not being dangerous on any city or highway road (which is absolutely ludicrous)—I'm on a racetrack. Even though I'm doing speeds above 100 mph, I'm safer on the track at a club-sponsored, "Track Day" than at 25 mph on the city streets in traffic. I bet you're wondering how that's possible.

Track days are designed for the sport bike rider, to get speeding off the roads where it doesn't belong. Safety precautions taken by these organizations include, but are not limited to, on-site instruction, medical staff, corner

workers, and signals via colored flags. Many clubs and organizations offer track time to motorcyclists across the nation, and you don't have to be a racer or have a race bike to attend. A lot of these clubs cater to novice riders, skilled street riders and racers alike. They do require a minimum amount of preparation for your street motorcycle, for you to ride on the track. This may include tapping off your headlight, taillight and turn signals, and possibly removing your rearview mirrors. Some clubs or tracks require you to do some safety wiring, but the club I attended did not. They only require your bike to be in good working order with no leaks, good tires, and the minimal prep work I just mentioned. Be sure to check

with your local track day organization(s) to find out more details.

Personal protection is a critical item of safety. Full leathers are required. One-piece leathers are preferred, but a two-piece suit is acceptable, as long as it zips all the way around your

torso (not all organizations agree, so check before you sign up). A DOT- and Snell-approved full-face helmet, full-fingered gloves and boots are the last of the minimum essentials to protect your body. A full-length back protector is recommended and should

be worn under the leathers. Some track day organizations require a back protector, so once again, check with the organization.

I recently attended a HyperCycle Track Day at the Streets of Willow, about seven miles west of Edwards AFB, Calif. HyperCycle is run by four-time American Motorcycle Association (AMA) National Champion and two-time AMA Tuner of the Year, Carry Andrew. About 50 riders participated in this event—some were on street bikes and some were on full race bikes.

After arriving at the track and unloading

the bike (riders should trailer their bikes to the track, in case they go off the track or their bikes break down), I signed in and then took my bike to the technical inspection area. Here they inspect all the bikes and personal protective gear before you go onto

the track. This is also where the inspector

asks your level of riding experience and places you in a specific group, depending on your riding ability. These groups differ in the speeds that the riders corner and accelerate

down the straightaways. You could be placed in the Street, Advanced or Race group.

Shortly after technical inspection is an all-hands rider safety meeting. The meeting consists of track etiquette, how-to-pass safely, right-of-ways, track flag conditions, and a question-and-answer session. The meeting usually lasts 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the number of questions. An instructor then

takes you around the track in a follow-the-leader style ride for a couple of slow warm-up laps, in order for you to acquaint yourself with the track and the turns before you go around on your own. It is not a full-fledged racing school, but rather a club that allows you time on the track for a small price (much less than a speeding ticket or a racing school), and they offer FREE personal sessions on the track to improve your riding skills.

HyperCycle puts on quite an event. For your safety, there are corner workers all the way around the track that use colored flags to assist the riders awareness, an on-site ambulance – just in case, and instructors all over the place. I had nearly a full 20-minute session of instruction. I followed one instructor around the

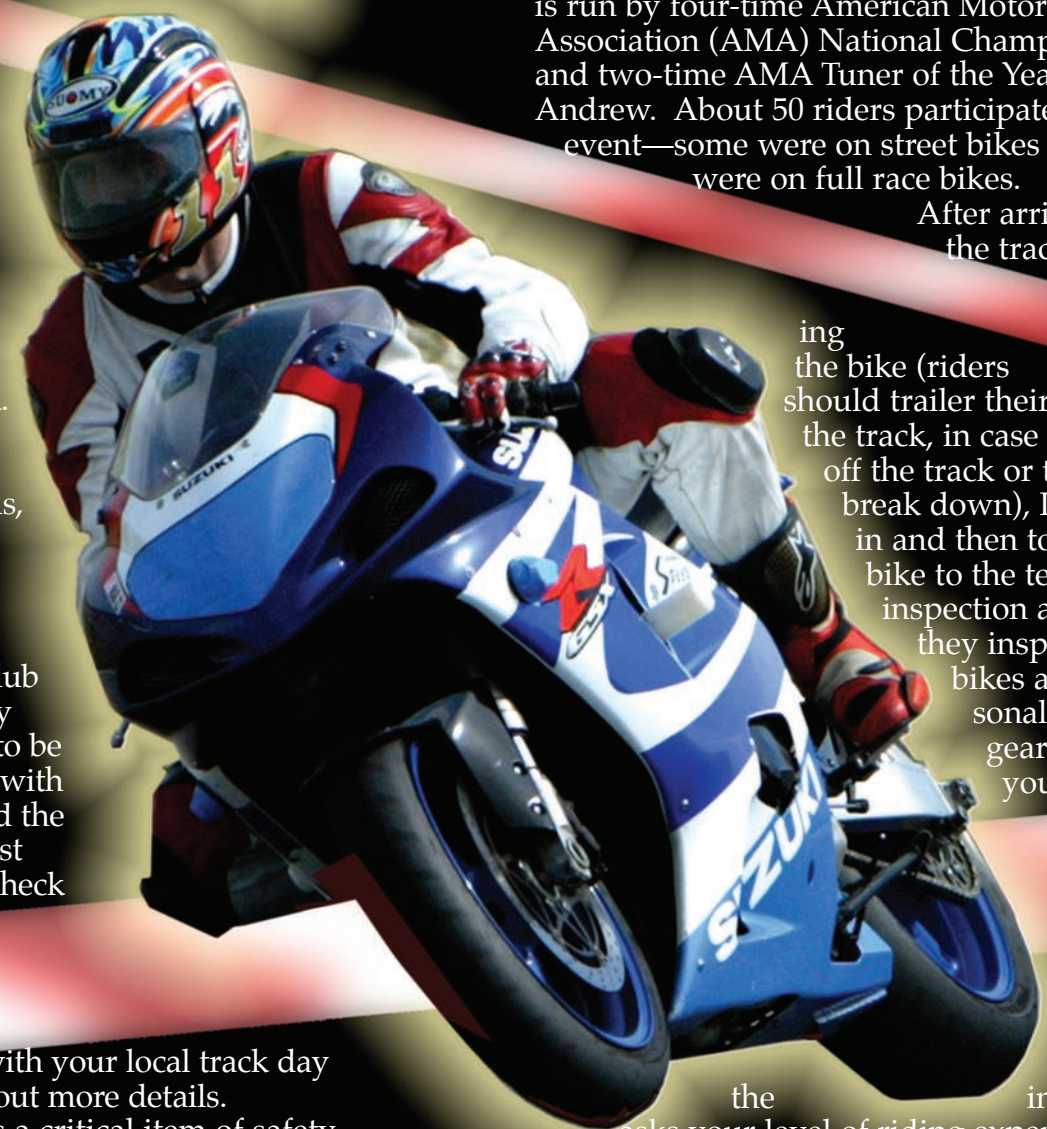
track for two laps and was directed to go in front, so he could evaluate my lines after he had shown me the proper ones. Not only was I able to follow the leader, after our session we came into the pit area and I got feedback on my riding style and the lines I chose around the track.

My confidence has increased

a little, but my skills have improved much more. I have a better knowledge of what my bike is capable of, and I have learned to use some of it.

The reason this type of riding is safer than street riding comes in many forms. You have to wear very good protective gear, you're separated into groups by level of experience and skill, everyone goes in the same direction, you

continued on next page





don't have to watch out for cross traffic, on-coming traffic, turning vehicles, dogs, kids, dirty or sandy conditions, and the list goes on. Emergency responders are on site, ready to act if the need occurs, and you have one-on-one instruction if you need it or ask for it (I did and it made my day better). You keep your speeds to your riding skill and abilities. Everyone is polite and helpful, and even the racers who come to ride will assist you if you ask. Don't try getting that on your local canyon roads—they may take you into uncharted territory and get you hurt.

Although many clubs offer free water (which you should take advantage of), I recommend

that you take your own water, some snacks and a good lunch if one is not provided. Many organizations offer track time. Look up your

local racetrack or local dealership and see who may be offering track time. I got lucky that HyperCycle offers track time just minutes away from Edwards AFB.

The best part of the track day is that at a cost less than a speeding ticket, you can be on the track all day, having the time of your life in a controlled environment, without getting into trouble. This had to be the best motorcycling day for me yet.

Keep it "Rubber Side Down"! ■



T r a c k

D a y

SafetyLitSM Injury Prevention Literature Update

Preventing injuries by providing informationSM



SAFETY RESEARCH UPDATE

The following information is courtesy of SafetyLit, a service of the San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health. SafetyLit summarizes copyrighted reports on safety research. SafetyLit staff and volunteers regularly examine more than 300 journals and scores of reports from government agencies and organizations. We've included these summaries in Road & Rec for their interest to the Air Force community. For more, go to this link: www.safetylit.org.

Can You See Me Now?

A review of 25 Daytime Running Lights (DRL) studies of cars and motorcycles showed that DRL reduced the number of multi-party daytime accidents in the European Union by 5-10 percent.

(Source: Institute of Transport Economics, 688. Oslo, Norway, 2003. Copyright© 2003, Institute of Transport Economics.)

Simulated Driving; Actually Sleepy

Swedish researchers used a driving simulator to study the effects of driving home after working the nightshift. The results indicate severe post-nightshift effects on sleepiness and driving performance. Ten shift workers participated after a normal nightshift and after a normal night's sleep. The results showed that driving home from the nightshift was associated with an increased number of incidents (two wheels outside the lane marking, from 2.4 to 7.6 times), decreased time to first accident, increased lateral deviation (from 18 to 43 cm), increased eye closure duration (0.102 to 0.143 s), and increased subjective sleepiness.

(Source: J Sleep Res 2005; 14(1): 17-20. Copyright© 2005, Blackwell Publishing.)

Sleep-Working

In a survey of nearly 3000 Japanese workers about their sleep habits and occupational injuries over the previous year, one-third reported being injured at work. Those who had difficulty falling asleep, slept poorly at night, had insufficient sleep, and insomnia, were significantly more likely to sustain injuries. The findings suggest that poor sleep habits are associated with occupational injury.

(Source: Ind Health 2005; 43(1): 89-97. Copyright ©

2005, National Institute of Industrial Health.)

Moms-To-Be In Car Crashes

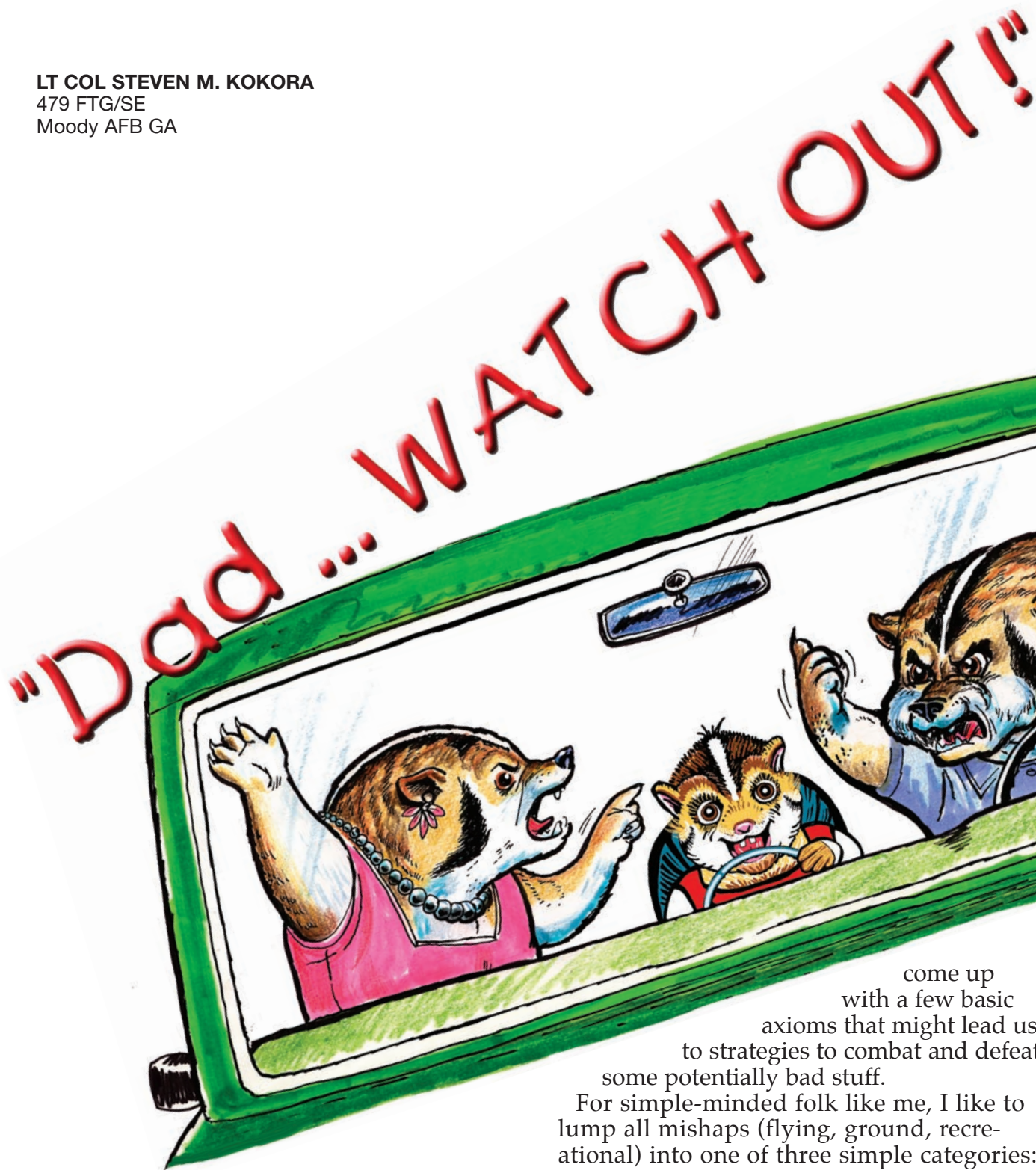
A study of nearly 600 women injured in car crashes in Washington State showed that pregnant women hospitalized after motor vehicle mishaps are at increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, regardless of the presence or severity of injuries, compared with pregnant women who had not been in crashes. Compared with women not in motor vehicle crashes, severely and non-severely injured women were at increased risk of placental abruption and cesarean delivery, and their infants were at increased risk of respiratory distress syndrome and fetal death. Uninjured women were also at increased risk of preterm labor and placental abruption, compared with women not in motor vehicle crashes.

(Source: Am J Epidemiol 2005; 161(6): 503-10. Copyright© 2005, Oxford University Press.)

Motorcyclists: Wear PPE, Be Visible, And Practice

Norwegian researchers studied motorcycle safety issues and reached several conclusions. Although the risk of being involved in a traffic accident is the same for motorcyclists and other road users, the injury risk for motorcyclists is much higher. Because it's unrealistic to assume that all accidents can be avoided, the study analyzed actions to reduce the severity of injuries in crashes. They found that compulsory licensing programs reduce accident risk, there's clear evidence for reduced injury severity for a rider who wears protective clothing and a helmet, and they believe that anti-lock brakes will prevent accidents and reduce injury severity. They found no evidence for a relationship between accident risk and motorcycle engine size/effect. However, a lack of proficiency seems to increase the risk of an accident. Increased motorcycle/motorcyclist visibility, such as using daytime running lights, reduces the risk of collision with another vehicle. Impact with crash barriers can result in severe injuries for motorcyclists, and they recommend improving such barriers and fences.

(Source: Institute of Transport Economics. Oslo, Norway, 2004. Copyright© 2004, Institute of Transport Economics.) ■



come up with a few basic axioms that might lead us to strategies to combat and defeat some potentially bad stuff.

For simple-minded folk like me, I like to lump all mishaps (flying, ground, recreational) into one of three simple categories: Stupid Human Tricks, Acts of God, and Breakable Chains.

Stupid Human Tricks

The first category (inspired by Late Night Dave) is events that are usually preceded with the words, "Watch this!" These words, generally harmless when spoken by a child on a three-foot diving board in the backyard pool, are not what I want to

hear from someone operating a bass boat or a motorcycle doing 80. Once, after hearing these words over the radio during a low-level in Northern Iraq, I responded with, "Wedge flight, KNOCK IT OFF ... NOW!!!" The lesson to be gleaned from this is that if someone is about to execute what looks like an (idiotically) entertaining maneuver, you probably want to either back up or get that person to terminate and rethink.

Acts of God

The second (inspired by the Weather Channel) is events that we really can't do too much about other than hunker down and get ready to pick up the pieces. Your house gets struck by lightning—Act of God. It's not that we can't plan ahead for Acts of God or nature; we can and we do. HUREVAC is a classic example. We know when the hurricane is coming; we disperse aircraft and assets to safer climes and strap down everything we can't take with us. I say "we" in this case because "we" all work together and act to mitigate the severity of the consequences.

Breakable Chains

The third category (inspired by reading countless, boring, safety reports) is mishaps where a chain of several events leads to someone's misfortune. Take, for example, the late Friday afternoon departure to Wally World. Mom and Dad work all day and pack the kids in the car for the trip down to Orlando. Some light drizzle off the Gulf makes the road a bit slippery and Dad slows down to 70 to compensate, but he still has to check into the hotel by 10 p.m. After a quick trip thru the McDrive for a gut bomb and fries, Mom and the kids are fast asleep by Gainesville. Dad has a little "fat puppy syndrome" as well, but drives on as the darkness and a bit of fog rolls across the interstate.

Can you see where this is going?

Whether Dad falls asleep and runs off the road or hits another car is unimportant. What is important is that while several factors usually lead to what could be a potential mishap, one intervention can save the day. Switching drivers, having someone stay awake and talk to the driver, or stopping for a while to rest and let the traffic clear are simple, singular actions that could break the chain of events leading up to a potential mishap.

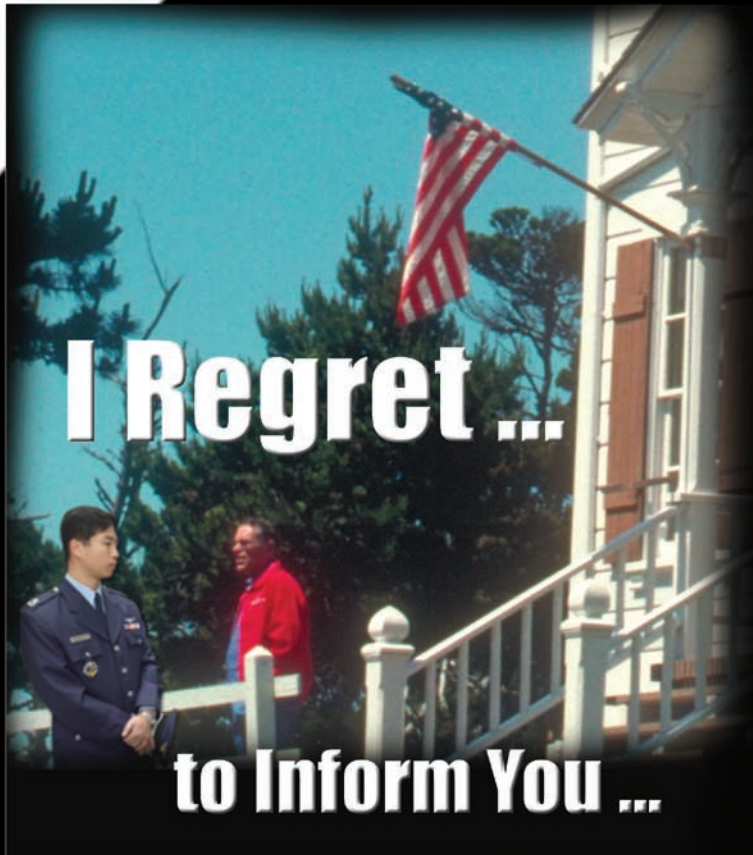
There were 78 ground fatalities in 2003, nine of which did not involve *driving* a conventional conveyance (car or motorcycle). The remaining 69 Airmen lost their lives while someone was driving. While most of those came with the common narrative "lost control of vehicle and struck a", five could be classified as Stupid Human Tricks, 12 involved other vehicles that may have been causal (possible Acts of God), and 20 involved alcohol. (I agree that drinking and driving is absolutely stupid, but it is preventable and not a Stupid Human Trick.) Can you believe that nearly one-third of our ground fatalities still involve alcohol? Egad!

Finally, 40 Airmen died on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Heck, if we could just prevent the weekend mishaps we could certainly meet the SECDEF's goal of reducing mishaps by 50 percent.

While we can't provide supervision for members while off duty in the conventional "hands-on, Friday briefing" sense, perhaps we could try a slight intervention to break that chain of events. As a supervisor, when those under my wing were on the road *solo*, I would call them on their cell. A 30-second call to check on how they were doing ("Is everything going as planned?") might be the difference between an uneventful trip and the next ground fatality.

If your wingmen get a little loose in formation to where you can't see them, it might not be a bad idea to say, "Two, say position" and if you know they're getting low, "Two, pull up!" If we'd do that much in the air, we could do at least that much on the ground for our wingmen on the road. I'm sure there's a commander or two out there who wouldn't mind their flight leads making one extra radio call. ■

After reading enough safety articles to tire even the staunchest of insomniacs, it occurred to me (in the latrine, of course) there are similarities about mishaps. These similarities allow me to group them into three categories and



MAJ JIM BURTON
366 FW
Mt Home AFB Idaho

I Regret ... to Inform You ...

It was in the spring of 1999 when Mrs. Smith awoke to the sound of her doorbell. She slowly got out of bed and looked at her clock.

It was 1:30 in the morning! Who could this be? She put on her robe, walked downstairs and peeked through the curtains. What she saw was every military spouse's or parent's nightmare. She cautiously opened the door and was visibly concerned when she saw three Air Force officers in service dress uniform. One of the officers introduced himself and asked, "Are you Mrs. Judy Smith, the mother of Airman John A. Smith?"

"Yes, I am. Is something wrong?" He didn't answer the question directly, but said, "I'd like to talk to both you and Mr. Smith. Is he here also?"

Mrs. Smith went upstairs to rouse her husband out of bed, and the two returned, worried about the nature of the visit at such a late hour.

The three officers were invited into the house. They quickly made an assessment of the living room arrangement and took their seats such that the only two remaining seats would naturally force Mr. and Mrs. Smith to sit next to one another. Mr. and Mrs. Smith looked at the spokesman expectantly as he began his remarks. "Mr. and Mrs. Smith, I'm sorry for such a late intrusion tonight. I have a message here that I'd like to read to you." He unfolded a piece of paper and read, "On behalf of the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, I regret to inform you that your son, Airman First Class John A. Smith, died today in a boating accident in Oklahoma."

Does this scenario sound phony? Perhaps like an old World War II movie, in which a mail carrier delivers telegrams from the War Department? Or a scene in which the test pilot's family peeks through the curtains as a government vehicle stops in front, and they panic because they know what the horrible news is going to be?

It wasn't phony that night for "Mr. and Mrs. Smith." It was very real for them, and very painful. I know that because I was there that night. I was the spokesman, the death notification officer who read those scripted words.

Just two months earlier, an email circulated through my squadron stating that we needed a few volunteers for such duty. The duty rotated among squadrons on base, and for the next three months, my squadron was on call. I knew no one wanted this job, but I volunteered because I felt it was a necessary job that had to be carried out with respect and dignity. The occasional loss of a fellow Airman who dies serving his country is a fact of life for those of us who have chosen this profession, and the next of kin deserved our best efforts. Unfortunately, in this case, it was simply another recreational accident that probably could have been prevented.

I received a call at approximately 10 p.m. that Saturday from the base mortuary affairs office. It was midnight by the time I shaved, put on my service dress, got to the base, received my briefing, and met the other two officers. It would take us more than an hour to drive to Raleigh, N.C., to notify the parents of A1C Smith.

The two other officers were a doctor and a chaplain, both of whom had performed this duty several times before. The doctor was there to prescribe certain medications, if needed, or to provide hands-on medical assistance in case the next of kin had any severe reaction to the news. The chaplain was there to provide spiritual support.

I remember the nervousness I felt on the long drive. I was instructed to make sure both parents were there together when I gave them the news, so that they had each other for comfort. What would I say if the lady insisted on immediately knowing what was wrong before she went to get her husband? I was told some people remain composed, while others cry, flail, scream, or even become violent. What would I do then? Of course, my perceived problems were nothing compared to the loss this family was about to face.

After I read the statement from the Chief of Staff, I paused to give the couple a moment to react to their loss. The silence was awkward. The woman hugged her husband and the two exchanged whispered words. They maintained their composure while they asked a few other questions about the circumstances of their son's death. We had no other specific details. Instead, I provided them with other points of contact on base who would help them with this and other issues. Rather than being able to leave them to deal with their grief, we had to get their signatures on paperwork, also. Before we left, the doctor offered any service he could provide, and the chaplain led us all in a prayer. We then offered our personal condolences and said goodbye.

Finally, they had privacy to deal with their loss. As the door closed behind us and we walked to our car, I heard the loud wailing cries of the grieving mother. It's something I still think of now and then.

Why do I tell this story? Because the death of an Airman I never met became personal for me ... and I think the hundreds of deaths that

occur in the military each year should become personal for you, too.

I had lots to think about as we drove to and from the house. This Airman was only 20 years old, and he had a young wife who learned of his death just hours earlier. She didn't want to be the first to notify his parents, so she asked the Air Force to do it in person. I don't know if he had small children who would now grow up without their father, and I never found out the specific circumstances of the boating accident. Was he drunk? Was he waterskiing and killed himself trying some stunt? Or did he die through no fault of his own, but because of someone else's negligence? I do know that he did not die in combat, as we have seen so often in the news recently. He probably died from something that could have been prevented. More than 700 people died in boating accidents in 2000. Was this another?

Recreational and automobile accidents are all too common, and each of us needs to make this a personal issue. Even if it isn't your own safety at stake, take care of the person next to you. Before you climb the next mountain, jump out of a plane, or bounce your ATV across the desert, do proper risk management. Make sure you have the proper equipment, training, and skill. Now, I admit, a certain amount of risk is often what makes something fun and gets the adrenaline pumping, but it needs to be calculated risk, based on your skill level, experience, and possible failure. The result of that failure should be a few bruises, not a visit to the morgue. If your friend says "Hold my beer, and watch this" that's probably the time to stop what's about to happen.

We can't keep saying, "These things won't ever happen to me," because statistics say otherwise. I still imagine what must have been going through Mrs. Smith's mind as she walked up those stairs to get her husband, after seeing us at the door. The wait must have seemed an eternity for her.

What if that were my wife who had to raise our three children by herself? What if my children had to grow up without a father? What if YOURS did? We can't afford to simply think of all these deaths and injuries as something that happens to people we don't know.

The death of that Airman needs to become personal for you, too. ■



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Motorcycle Safety—A Moving Priority



TSGT BUCKY BURNSED
165 AW/PA
Savannah GA

Operating a motorcycle, in the best of circumstances, is a risky business. Any time a human body is propelled along at any speed above that of walking, there is a risk of injury. However, the speeds at which a motorcycle propels the human body along can be exorbitant, with little or no safety barrier compared to other motor vehicles. Obviously, the need for an increased attitude toward safety is paramount.

In the fall of 1999, an inspection revealed a severe lack in safety training for the National Guard. The active-duty military had enjoyed a long history of providing safety courses for their service members, but traditional guardsmen were simply not as fortunate. Especially when you consider that while safety courses were available on active-duty installations, Guard units were routinely allocated only

three or four spaces per class, which would never meet the ever-growing number of riders in the Guard. Obviously, continuing to rely on outside assistance to provide this training was not a viable solution. The National Guard needed to become the master of its destiny.

To correct this flaw in training, CMSgt Don Williams, the lead NCO for the Operations Safety Office of the Air National Guard Readiness Center, proposed a new plan to close this gap in training. His first call was to SMSgt Tim Mehlhorn, Safety Manager for the Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC), Savannah, Georgia. SMSgt Mehlhorn pointed out that producing a program to provide this level of training required a significant amount of permanent funding. After Chief Williams approached the National Guard Commander, Lt Gen Daniel James, the funding was summarily approved. The proposal also met with enthusiastic support locally from Savannah's CRTC Commander, Col Floyd Harbin and Col Steven Westgate,

commander of the 165th Airlift Wing. (Both the Savannah CRTC and the 165 AW are collocated at Travis Field in Savannah, Ga.)

To put this into proper perspective, the CRTC and 165th Airlift Wing, which boasts a membership nearing 1000, have more than 150 registered motorcycle riders, all with varying levels of competency and safety levels. Nationally, the National Guard is seeing an increase in motorcycle-related mishaps and fatalities, which adds to the need for safety training.

The rubber finally met the road in June 2004 (all puns intended) when SMSgt Mehlhorn welcomed other Air National Guard members from West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and other units in Georgia to the Savannah CRTC for the first-of-its-kind National Guard Motorcycle Safety Instructors Course, taught by Mr. Joe Perfetto, an instructor from the Naval Safety Center. These soon-to-be instructors will return to their local areas to provide motorcycle training.

In the coming weeks and months, this long-

awaited course, hosted locally by the Savannah CRTC, will be offered to safety managers from National Guard Units across the United States.

The impact of this program will be felt immediately as safety managers return to their units across the nation, such as our own SMSgt Mehlhorn and SMSgt Reginald McPherson, Ground Safety Manager for the 165 AW. These instructors are recognized by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, the national accrediting agency for motorcycle safety.

No longer will the Guard have to rely on outside agencies—military or local law enforcement—to provide this vital training for our members.

Finally, the lasting effects will be shown in improved driver safety, thus contributing to the overall successful mission of the National Guard. ■

Maj. Scott Yackley, 113 DC ANG, Capt. Kevin Kling, 113 DC ANG, and James A. Faile, SC ANG, study for a written exam as they prepare to become members of the first ANG class of motorcycle safety instructors.

TSgt Edward Rollyson, 167 WV ANG, SMSgt Randy E. King, 165 AW and SSgt Kevin S. Diamond, 167 WV ANG, are hard at work studying as they prepare to become instructors in the first ANG Motorcycle Rider Instructor Course.

1st Lt. Thomas Smith, 130 AW Charleston, WV ANG, provides instructions to members of the 165 AW as they prepare to ride their motorcycles in one of the 17 range exercises.

MSgt Thomas Trawick, 165 AW, provides guidance to students as they prepare to ride the Basic Riders Course.



Tips From a Bike Cop



MSGT DARRYL S. PLUMB
152 AW/JA
Reno IAP NV

As a member of the Nevada Air National Guard, I embraced the opportunity to volunteer for an AEF rotation at 1st AF, as a member of the Legal Office at Tyndall AFB. Since coming here, I have seen a lot of material and heard many discussions on motorcycle safety, which is an item of interest for Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Jumper.

In my civilian capacity, I am a police officer with the Reno Police Department, and for the past four years, I've been assigned as a Motorcycle Traffic Officer.

I began my riding career many years ago, when I was on active duty at Kirtland AFB, NM. First came the dual sport bike, then a smallish cruiser. This quickly ended

when I PCS'd to Berlin, Germany. I did not pick it up again until I was discharged and took up residence in Reno.

Once in Reno, I jumped up to a 900cc bike, and then to the full dress Kawasaki Voyager. I had many rides, but never really went through any formalized training. I thought I knew how to ride a motorcycle. But four years ago, I found out that I really knew nothing!

That is when I was selected to attend my Department's Motor School. Two 40-hour-plus weeks. At any time, you can be removed from the school and sent back to patrol duties. This was the toughest school I have ever attended, either law enforcement or military. Not only are there the physical demands of the training, but also the mental training that you go through can be just as exhausting! Every night I would come home, shower, soak my aching feet, and go right to sleep.

This training, however, has saved my life on several instances, some of them involving accidents while on duty. Had I not had both the experience AND the training, these accidents might have turned out differently.

The first week of August is our largest special event, "Hot August Nights," a celebration of 1950s culture and cars. One night, after having been on duty for 14 hours, I was under heavy acceleration trying to catch a traffic offender. I was riding the opposite direction of bumper-to-bumper traffic. Being alert, I saw that another car was turning left from a casino parking lot—right into the lane I was in! Using the skills I had learned and practiced, I quickly slowed, but saw that I could not avoid colliding with the car. Under threshold braking (just before skidding) I slowed enough to just tap the rear quarter panel of that car. No one was injured, there was minimal damage to the car, and nothing but a scraped engine guard on my bike. Had I not been trained, had I not been alert, the result could have been tragic.

I cannot stress enough the importance of training. Riding a motorcycle involves many similar skills used in driving a car, and many more that have nothing to do with an automobile. If you wish to take up motorcycling, get the training! Many different sources have schools, including your local DMV, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, Harley-Davidson, and others. If you have not attended a course in a while, or are rejoining motorcycling, take a refresher course or the Experienced Riders Course. In my civilian occupation, I must attend a yearly refresher, and have also attended two other full-blown motor schools.

Some Other Tips:

(1) **Know the laws.** For example, some states allow lane sharing (or lane splitting), others do not. In states where lane sharing is illegal, motorists won't be looking for you, and you run the risk of injury.

(2) **Drinking and riding** ... under no circumstances. 'Nuff said.

(3) **Wear protective gear/clothing.** I wear my helmet, gloves, jeans and boots. I have seen riders in accidents who were

wearing shorts and sandals, and the results were not pretty.

(4) **Above all, wear a helmet.** It's a DOD requirement. I know state law says you don't have to in Florida and some other states, but it doesn't take much to turn your brain to mush when your head hits the pavement, even at slower speeds.

(5) **Know your limits.** When riding with a group, if some of them ride faster than you want to—Let 'em! Besides, you'll see more of the scenery. Also, remember that having a passenger or extra gear can alter your riding ability, if you are not used to it.

(6) **Be aware of your surroundings.** I have had other motorists look right at me, and then pull out in front of me. While they are receiving their citation, they have told me that they never saw me. But I saw them, and knew they were going to pull in front of me, and I was able to avoid a collision. Look out for the basketball rolling between parked cars, and the child running after it.

(7) **If I heard it once, I've heard it a hundred times ... surface appraisal!** Check out the road ahead ... far ahead. If you are looking down just in front of your front tire, you've already passed it. Look out for those dark spots (oil?); grayish spots (sand?); wet spots (water?); uneven pavement (hole, rut?).

(8) **Head check.** Use your mirrors, but don't rely on them. Always turn your head, use your peripheral vision to check, use your mirror, then change lanes, turn, etc.

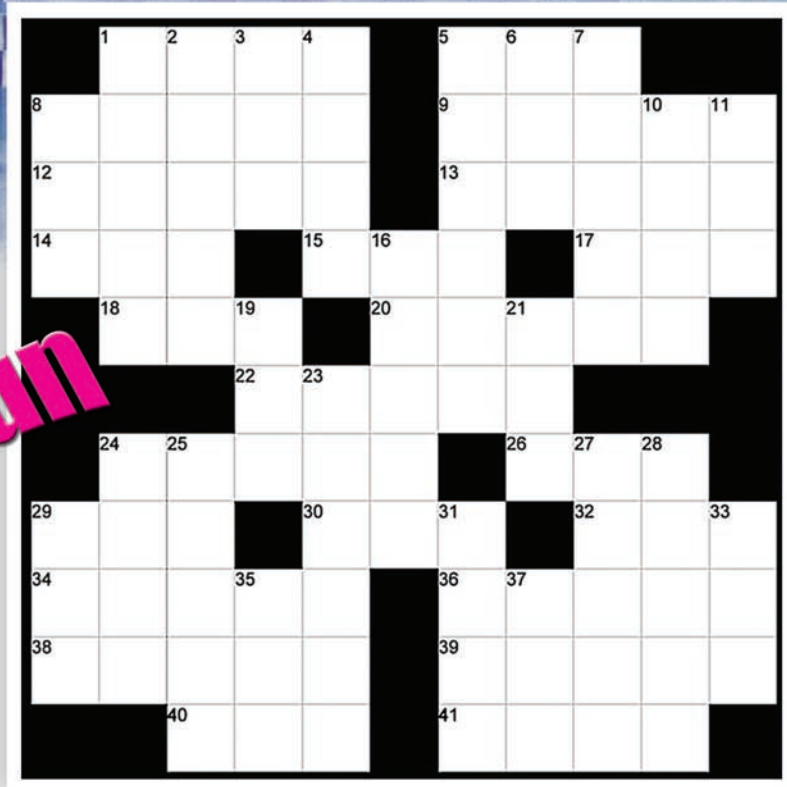
(9) **Another thing I've heard a million times ... clutch/throttle.** This is where your bike's power is. Proper use of clutch and throttle will help to get you out of a sticky situation.

(10) **Head and eye placement.** If you look at the rock in the middle of the road, you will hit it. If you are looking at the car door that just opened in your path, you'll hit it. Look up; look ahead.

(11) **Have fun!** I ride because I want to, not because I have to. I enjoy riding, and have met some wonderful people because of it. The companionship of a group of friends while riding will lead to some wonderful memories. ■

Swimming Fun

1ST LT TONY WICKMAN
ALCOM/JO2PA
Elmendorf AFB AK



ACROSS

1. Picnic crashers
5. Fall behind
8. Swimming safety item
9. Musical theater work
12. Go ____; what a swimmer should never do
13. Creed
14. Jogged quickly
15. AT&T competitor
17. Ply "____ your head!"
18. All in favor, say "____"
20. Bird's place
22. Slants
24. Perpendicular, for boats
26. ____ a Wonderful Life
29. African antelope
30. Guidance for some AF munitions
32. AF commissioning source
34. Archetype
36. "____ the best of times..."
38. Tennis champion Agassi
39. Freeloader
40. "____" or "No"
41. For Your Eyes ____

DOWN

1. Calm or ____ ones fears
2. Who should take risks in the pool?
3. Goal of sunbathing
4. Flower part
5. Necessary safety item if doing 3 DOWN
6. To copy other's action
7. Biologic taxonomy hierarchy
8. Distant
10. What to do after a long swim
11. Had a meal (and should wait before swimming!)
16. Muscle pain (can be from swimming immediately after eating)
19. Should never be consumed before swimming
21. USAF investigative agency
23. F-15s
24. In a short time; soon
25. Swimming ____; someone else present during a swim
27. Item to dry with
28. Actor Keach
29. ABC morning show, in short
31. Place for a LGM-30G Minuteman III
33. Library sound
35. Before, poetically
37. X to Julius Caesar



Safety Shorts



Driving Stats: Adding It Up

In 2002, 43,005 people died and another 3.03 million were injured on U.S. roads. Traffic crashes continue to account for 95 percent of all transportation fatalities and 99 percent of injuries, and are the leading cause of death for individuals ages 3 through 33.

These deaths cost \$230.6 billion a year—\$820 for every person living in the U.S.

One in every eight drivers will be involved in a motor vehicle crash this year.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

More than 50 percent of head-on crashes happen in broad daylight, and 80 percent happen on dry pavement.

Driver error causes 62 percent of all motor vehicle crashes.

Traffic death rates are three times greater at night than during the day.

More than 41,000 people lose their lives in motor vehicle crashes each year, and more than two million more suffer disabling injuries.

Source: National Safety Council.

Each year, more than 1.8 million intersection crashes occur. Preliminary estimates for 2001 indicate that red light running caused 200,000 crashes, 150,000 injuries, and about 1,100 deaths.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration.

Young Drivers: Gone In A Flash

Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death among children and young adults. Each year, more than 3,500 young people ages 15-20 die in traffic crashes, and more than 362,000 are injured.

In 1999, 3,561 people ages 15-20 died in motor vehicle crashes—the leading cause of death for this age group.

Young drivers are only 6.8 percent of the nation's licensed drivers, but they are involved in fatal crashes at more than twice the rate of the rest of the population—and are in 15 percent of all deadly crashes.

Source: National Safety Council.

Infinitely More Fun; Four Times More Damage

The effects of a crash involving a motorcycle can often be devastating. While 20 percent of passenger vehicle crashes result in injury or death, an astounding 80 percent of motorcycle crashes result in injury or death.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Riders: Look Out For #1

Many motorcycle deaths could be prevented if motorcyclists would ride safe, by taking operator training, wearing protective gear, and riding sober.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Drinking and Driving

Every 33 minutes, someone dies in an alcohol-related crash.

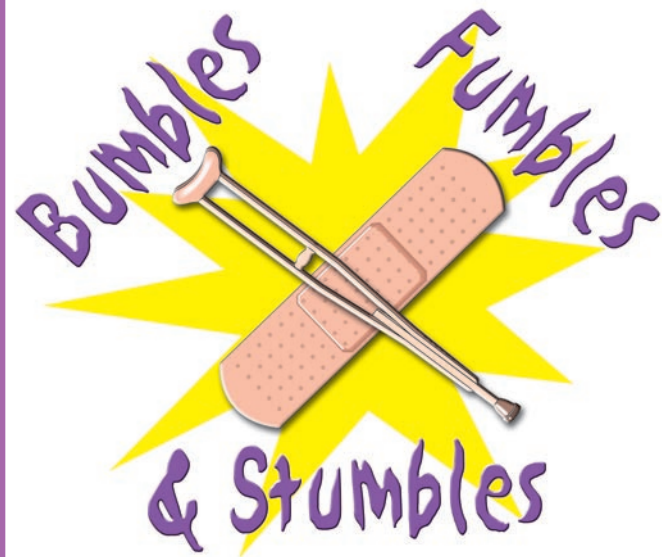
In 1998, alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes killed nearly 16,000 people.

Alcohol is a factor in well more than one-third of all traffic crashes.

About 29 percent of crashes killing young people involve alcohol.

Almost 1,000 young adults lose their lives every year in crashes because of an impaired driver—themselves or someone else.

Source: National Safety Council.



famous-last-words response, Kid says, "I'll be fine. Go ahead." The driver lets the truck creep over the curb, and then steps on the gas, causing the truck to jump. He sees what he thinks is Kid jumping off the tailgate. What really happens is that Kid slides off and his noggin hits the ground, hard enough to draw blood. The driver's phone call gets a quick response from the base fire department. On-scene treatment, a trip to the base hospital, the diagnosis of a concussion and sprained neck, memory loss and a lost workday follow. Kid blames his slick shorts for the slide. Conspicuously absent from this operation were common sense and established Air Force vehicle procedures.

"Dirty Harry," You Ain't

In the 1971 movie "Dirty Harry," Clint Eastwood's cop character held a pistol on a bad guy and said, "This is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world, and would blow your head clean off." Our story is about an Airman wielding the same kind of handgun, but not with the same style. He went home one night and heard something in the back room. Then he heard it again, louder this time. He thought it was somebody climbing out the window, so he picked up his roomie's .44 Magnum. That's when he heard what sounded like someone coming toward him. He cocked the pistol and started to raise it. Taking careful aim, he drew a bead and ... shot a divot in the hallway floor. The round bounced up and passed through his leg. He got an ambulance ride, a fractured leg, two days in the hospital and three days on quarters.



Buzzkill

I don't know about you, but when I encounter the stinging members of the suborder Apocrita, order Hymenoptera, I make tracks in the other direction. You might think that creatures called "social wasps" would be OK to have around, but entomologists say that humans should be wary around them. They're aggressive and easily provoked, and they sting in numbers when disturbed. Most wasps aid humans greatly by destroying many insects, such as caterpillars, that compete with us for food. However, anybody who's allergic to their sting, or who just generally doesn't like critter-based injections, would think discretion is the better part of valor and try to get away from them. When the star of our story saw a squadron of wasps egressing the bathroom vent of his house, he seized the initiative and struck first with an anti-critter chemical weapon. A few of the hardier survivors mounted a counteroffensive against our hero. Displaying a genuine sense of urgency, he ran to get out of the bathroom, but slipped on the insecticide-oversprayed hardwood floor and landed on his left hand. Sometime later, he noticed swelling in the hand



continued on next page

The following short articles are derived from actual Air Force Class C mishaps. Our intent is not to make light of anyone's pain, even if it is sometimes self-inflicted; it's the questionable decisions and behavior we're pointing out. This is just a different approach to getting people to read about safety. Check 'em out—you just might get a laugh, and learn something, too.

Man Versus Lawn: The Eternal Struggle

Testosterone and technology combined to rough up a guy who only wanted to get a chore done quickly. He had hooked up a powered trail-mower to his ATV—suggested in the mower owner's manual for a faster, wider cut—to cut the grass at his house. He was backing down a steep hill when the mower stopped, but the ATV's momentum kept it moving back. His trusty steed then tipped over, pinning him to the ground. He untangled himself from the ATV and went inside to call 911. After his ambulance ride to the hospital, the docs diagnosed a fractured jaw and cheekbones, and a strained knee. The lawn-mower man said he didn't wear a helmet because he was using the ATV for work, not recreation. The task—and especially the results—are not my idea of fun, either.



Hey, Slick!

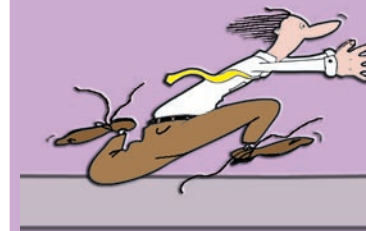
The Spandex Kid is helping his bud on a detail. After they load some gear into the bed of a pickup, Kid sits down on the tailgate while his buddy gets into the cab and starts the engine. "Sit up here with me," the driver says. "It's not safe to ride back there." Issuing the



Bumbles, Fumbles & Stumbles ... continued from page 24

and went to the hospital. X-rays showed a fracture, which led to surgery to install temporary pins.

Can You Hear Me Now?



It's 11 p.m. Guy's gotta go downstairs to his car. Gets a call on his cell. Trips on his shoelace, tumbles down the steps. The better half hears his yelp for help, bandages his dinged-up melon, and then drives him to the ER. He doesn't need stitches, but he does get to spend three days on quarters.

This Bike Wasn't Made For Jumpin'

Bicycling Bill has been riding on the trail for about half an hour when he finds the perfect spot for a bunny-hop over a fallen tree. The trouble is that the front tire doesn't want to hop. It wants to keep rolling, so it does, right into the tree. That's when Bill goes airborne. Undaunted after the tumble, he dusts himself off, hops back in the saddle and presses on. Later that night, messages come in from the remote outpost of Bill's left wrist, signaling him that it's time for a ride to the hospital. The ER doc diagnoses a fracture and gives Bill 48 hours on quarters.



Quick Thaw For A Spring-y Chicken

Home for lunch, this would-be Col. Sanders decided to boil some frozen chicken breasts that had been thawing in the fridge. After a few minutes, she went to turn them with tongs. They had thawed enough to come apart, and as they plopped into the pot, the boiling water splashed out onto her leg and foot. The ER doc diagnosed first- and second-degree burns.



A	N	T	S	L	A	G	
F	L	O	A	O	P	E	R
A	L	O	N	T	E	N	E
R	A	N	M	C	I	U	S
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Swimming Fun answers to page 22

Editor's note: "Sgt. Smith" is not his real name.

I never thought that when I joined the Air Force, I'd have the ill-fated experience of being a Family Liaison Officer (FLO). It wasn't a bad experience because I was busy at work, and it was just another additional duty. I disliked the duty because it meant that not only did a family lose one of its members, but so did our squadron. A 12-year-old boy is now without a father because no one was looking out for Sgt. Smith—no one was being his wingman.

It all started out as a typical Tuesday. The wing had Monday off because of the Fourth of July weekend, so we were in the middle of the 101 Critical Days of Summer. This was my third summer as the squadron's Unit Safety Rep, and the third year I had briefed the entire squadron on remembering to stay safe, especially during this critical time, when most accidents occur off duty.

When I got back to work after the holiday, the NCO who shared safety duty with me asked if I'd heard that Sgt. Smith was in a motorcycle accident. I hadn't, so I started to investigate what happened. We'd just had another motorcycle accident the week before. In that incident, the NCO was doing everything right, but had the unfortunate experience of a dog running out in front of him. He had some injuries, but none were life-threatening, and I just assumed this new accident would be the same.

I went to the First Sergeant and asked if he knew what the situation was. That's when I found out that it was a lot worse than the accident the week before. One of our NCOs was in the intensive care unit, and there was little known about what happened.

I got hold of his fiancée to learn as much as I could about the mishap. I found out that on

the day of the accident, Sgt. Smith and his fiancée were leaving a party—he rode his motorcycle while she followed him home in a friend's car. She said that Sgt. Smith rode out of her sight, and she just assumed he'd be waiting for her at home. She got home and he wasn't there, so she waited a little bit and started to back track. That's when she came upon the ambulance.

By the time she reached the accident scene, Sgt. Smith had already been airlifted to the hospital. That's not a good sign, when the hospital is only 20 minutes away by car.

Sgt. Smith was in the ICU with a couple of broken bones and some bad road rash, but his fiancée said he was in good shape and should be out of the ICU in just a few days. I gave her my number, and asked if anything changed, for her to give me a call. I called and checked up with her every other day and stopped by the hospital, and the outcome sounded good.

On July 14th, I got the call that Sgt. Smith had died. I spoke with our Chief, and let our commander know what just happened. I was assigned as the FLO, so I rushed off to the hospital to be with the family. I tried my best to help the family deal with what had just happened. He was in the ICU for 12 days, and every indication they received said he would pull through. I helped plan his memorial and funeral, and the family was thankful for all the help the Air Force gave them.

Loss of a Wingman

We'll never know for certain what took place in the final moments of the mishap, because there were no witnesses. We know he had spent the entire day going from bar to bar with his fiancée, and was even with local Army friends. Police estimated his speed at the time of the accident to be at least 85 mph in a 55-mph zone. Both the doctors and police said he wasn't wearing a helmet, and he had a blood alcohol concentration of more than three times the 0.08 legal limit. He died of respiratory insufficiency, brought on by acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) that

was caused by the accident—his lungs shut down. We started to look into things, and found out that he had done everything he could to get around the rules. He'd done the required initial one-on-one brief with the commander to be a motorcycle rider, and stopped there. Sgt. Smith never registered his bike on base, and hadn't taken the required Motorcycle Safety Foundation course. We found out that he'd mentioned to co-workers that he did not like wearing his helmet. He lived about an hour away from base, and just didn't ride to work. He felt what he did on his



own time was his business. His cavalier attitude only resulted in compounding the tragedy. All the goodwill the family felt toward the Air Force changed when they found out that Sgt. Smith was found not in the Line of Duty, and that his son would not receive any survivor benefits, other than the SGLI. His son lost more than \$24,000 a year in benefits, and does not qualify to use his dad's GI Bill for college, because of the choice his father made. I'm sure this was one of the hardest decisions that Sgt. Smith's squadron and wing commander will ever have to make.

The saddest part of the whole event was that it didn't have to happen. Sgt. Smith's friends and fiancée knew that what he was doing was unsafe and wrong, but no one stopped him. There is no telling what could have prevented the accident, but there were so many chances for someone to say something. No one ever did.

When people think about motorcycle accidents, most only think about the 18-26-year-

continued on next page

old males who ride sport bikes. Sgt. Smith was 37, and rode a Harley. It can happen to anyone.

I still remember seeing Sgt. Smith in the morgue and wondering why someone didn't look out for him. I'd bet that his friends would never let their sons or brothers do the things they let Sgt. Smith do. No one was looking out for this wingman. They did every-



thing they could to avoid confrontation, and the result was Sgt. Smith losing his life.

It doesn't matter if it's your supervisor or subordinate—you have to look out for people. If you see them doing something stupid, stop them. I don't think anyone in the Air Force today would punish an Airman for stopping a supervisor from driving intoxicated, if he did it in an appropriate way. The easiest way to prevent a mishap is to stop it before it ever happens. ■



TRAILER TOWING

MAJ BYRON NOLAN
723 AMS/MXA
Ramstein AB GE



it had been traveling a few seconds before. The driver was wearing a seat belt, and eventually emerged from the car uninjured, but clearly distraught. The trailer ended up right behind the car, unattached, but so close that the trailer light cable was still plugged in, and hardly any of the dirt was thrown out.

Several factors contributed to the accident. Many of these we seldom consider, but if we practice Operational Risk Management (ORM), we should.

The first problem was the gross weight of the trailer was too much for the vehicle. The owner's manual gives allowable maximums that should not be exceeded. This allowed the trailer to control the car as it started to sway, instead of vice versa.

The next problem was speed. We often drive with a heavy trailer at the same speeds we normally drive, not considering that the additional speed and weight makes stopping and cornering a totally new game. The old axiom that speed kills certainly applies here.

Another problem was the way the trailer was loaded. When the accident was over, the tongue of the trailer was up in the air, and it took four guys to pull it down. Trying to stop too fast, in conjunction with the light tongue weight, caused the trailer to lift the back end of the car off of the pavement, resulting in loss of control. Trailers should have 60 percent of the weight in front of the axle.

As with most accidents, a combination of small factors, any one of which being eliminated may have changed the whole equation, resulted in a potentially deadly situation.

Next time you hook up to that boat, camper, horse trailer or utility trailer, consider the potential handling and performance changes you have attached, and make the necessary changes to keep yourself and others safe. ■

I find that trailer towing is far more common in Europe than in the United States, but no less dangerous. Seems that almost every car in Europe, from Opels to Mercedeses, has a trailer hitch. I've even seen a 944 Porsche with a hitch.

One brisk fall morning, my wife and I were returning from a flea market, when I noticed a small car towing a trailer with a load of dirt. The trailer must have weighed almost as much as the tow vehicle, but I didn't think much about it.

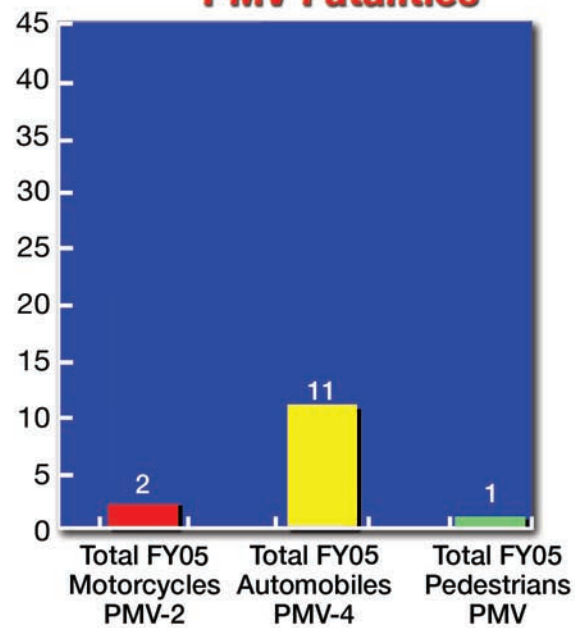
I ended up behind this car, and as we passed through town, we got up to about 80 or 90 KPH on the open two-lane road. I noticed the trailer was unstable, as it started to rock back and forth ahead of me and quickly got worse.

Within two or three seconds, the trailer went from a gentle rock to a violent sway. I told my wife, "Watch this!" (the most common statement before something bad happens). The driver tried to slow down too quickly, complicating the problem, and the trailer actually caused the car to turn over, ending upside down in a ditch, facing the opposite direction from which

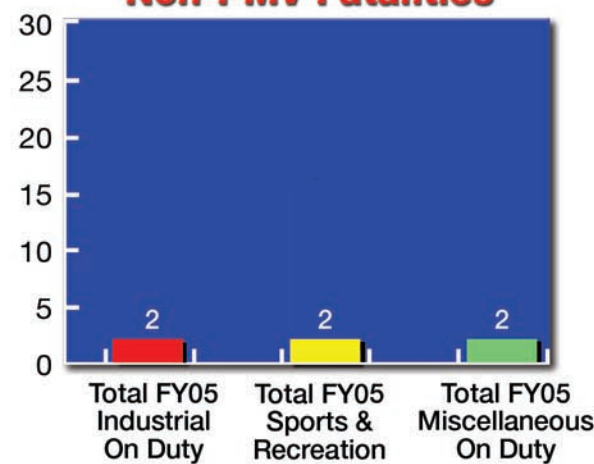


Snapshot on Safety

PMV Fatalities



Non-PMV Fatalities



2nd Qtr FY05 Update

In the second quarter of FY05, automobile mishaps continued as the leading cause of death for our Airmen. This quarter we suffered six automobile deaths, one motorcycle death, one sports and recreation death, one pedestrian fatality, and two on-duty deaths. So far this FY, 20 Airman have died, and we haven't even begun the "101 Critical Days of Summer." Every mishap was preventable.

There aren't any new ways to get killed. Our folks continue to drive too fast for road conditions, oversteer during emergencies, fail to wear seatbelts, drive while fatigued, and drink and drive. As a result, our Airmen continue to die. Risk management is clearly lacking. Supervisors and peers MUST get involved. Be a Wingman.

Drinking Impairs Judgment and Excessive Speed Kills

Two Airmen died in a vehicle wreck at night

on a four-lane, undivided road, about three miles from their base. The weather was dry and clear. The vehicle was going 95 miles per hour in a 50-mph zone. Attempting to pass a slower vehicle, the Airman lost control and struck a third vehicle in the rear, after passing the first one. The mishap vehicle then swerved and hit a curb off the right side of the road, rolled, struck a concrete-and-brick sign, slid 200 feet, and came to rest on the driver's side. Neither Airman was wearing a seatbelt. The driver died, and the passenger is permanently disabled and will be medically discharged from the Air Force. Both had consumed at least three beers at the base Airman's Club within two hours of the fatal mishap. They were supposed to meet their wives for a movie, and were late.

Lesson learned: Speeding, drinking and driving is a deadly combination.

The Airman was driving to work on a four-lane,



undivided city highway at the 45 mph speed limit. There was light rain. Another vehicle, driving at high speed and darting in and out of traffic, came up behind the Airman's vehicle and hit it in the right rear. This caused the Airman's vehicle to spin out of control across three lanes of the highway and into oncoming traffic. The Airman's vehicle was next broadsided in the driver's door by a third vehicle. The Airman suffered fatal chest and head injuries, even though he was wearing his seatbelt. The non-Air Force operator of the second vehicle fled the scene and was later arrested. Several charges are filed against him.

Lesson learned: You never can be sure of what the other driver will do ... be prepared.

The Airman had been out drinking at local bars with friends. A designated driver was with the group. They all decided to go to another bar, about four miles away. The designated driver asked the Airman if he wanted a ride, because he had walked to the bar. The Airman declined, and the designated driver assumed he was riding with someone else. Instead, the Airman, who lived nearby, walked home, got on his motorcycle and drove to the next bar. Other members of the party saw him arrive at the bar on his motorcycle. He was not wearing a helmet, gloves, eye protection, or reflective vest. Inside the bar, the Airman consumed four or five mixed drinks. The designated driver asked for his keys twice, but he refused to give over his keys. The Airman left the bar undetected and without saying goodbye to anyone. The Airman's apartment was about three miles from the bar. About 1/2-mile from the bar, while operating at 55 mph in a 24-mph zone, the Airman lost control of his motorcycle in a sweeping curve. He was on the wrong side of the road. He struck one of several 18-inch diameter culverts parallel to the curve. He slid semi-upright along these culverts, then struck a 4-by-4-foot wooden post, and was thrown off the motorcycle. The Airman received fatal injuries.

Lesson learned: Alcohol use, failure to wear protective equipment, and poor risk management resulted in another death.

The Airman was a passenger in the backseat

of a vehicle driven by a non-Air Force civilian. Their vehicle was traveling well over the 70 mph speed limit on a divided interstate, when the driver turned to look at a crying baby in the backseat and drifted off the road onto the shoulder. The driver attempted to pull back onto the road, and lost control of the vehicle, which rolled several times. The Airman was not wearing a seatbelt, was ejected as the vehicle rolled, and sustained fatal injuries. Another passenger (non-Air Force) in the rear seat also sustained fatal injuries, despite wearing a seatbelt.

Lesson learned: Speeding, distraction, over-correction and not wearing seatbelts kills.

An Airman died after being struck by a vehicle when attempting to cross a street. The Airman had been out partying with friends at local night-clubs. He drank several alcoholic beverages. He had parked his car in a no-parking zone, and when he returned several hours later, a tow truck was hooked up to his car. He asked the driver to unhook his car. The driver said it would cost the Airman money. The Airman then ran toward an ATM down the street. He was running in the median, facing oncoming traffic. He tried to dart across the street directly in front of a vehicle, was run over and received fatal injuries.

Lesson learned: Alcohol takes away your ability to manage risks.

Three Airmen decided to drive to a town about 50 miles from their base late on a Saturday night. There were snow flurries and the temperature was about 29 degrees. The driver and the front seat passenger wore their seatbelts. The Airman passenger in the right rear of the SUV failed to wear his seatbelt. The vehicle was traveling 55 mph on a divided four-lane interstate (speed limit 75 mph), and attempted to pass a slower vehicle. The SUV hit an icy spot on the road, "fishtailed" when the driver stepped on the brakes, skidded left onto the median, and rolled side-over-side three times, coming to rest upright. The Airman in the rear was ejected and is now in a coma. There is no brain activity.

Lesson learned: Driving too fast for road conditions and failure to wear seatbelts is deadly. ■



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