

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

ROAD & REC

Volume 13, Number 3

Summer 2001



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How to Survive a Summer Road Trip

Courtesy *SAFETYLINE*, Summer 1996

Because everyone wants to get away from it all during the summer, the highways become endless parades of cars, trucks, minivans, trailers, boats and campers. Roads overloaded with traffic, and cars overloaded with people and luggage, can combine to magnify the smallest mistake and create a tragic situation. This is when your defensive driving skills are going to be valuable.

Before you start, make an itinerary, and give yourself extra time to make it through any congested sections of the highway you may encounter. Stop frequently to rest or change drivers. Here are some more tips to remember:

1. Clear the rear window ledge of stuffed animals, food containers or pillows so the driver has a clear view. Don't store heavy items, such as cameras, on the ledge. These can become dangerous flying objects if your car stops abruptly.

2. Pack road maps of the areas you'll be touring, even if you've

driven the route before; areas can change because of construction. A map can be handy during an emergency or unplanned stop.

3. Bring along things to occupy children during the long stretches of highway. They may enjoy storybooks, coloring books and crayons, puzzles, hand-held games, and personal tape players with headphones.

4. Check your hoses and belts. Examine your tires (including the spare) for cuts, bulges and tread wear. Check the air pressure. Fill the radiator with the recommended levels of antifreeze and water. Look closely at every hose you can reach, and replace any that are cracked, brittle or soft. Do the same for belts.

5. Check your battery, brakes and fluids. Examine the battery's cables and clamps for corrosion. Does your brake pedal go more than half-way down, or do you hear grinding? If so, your brakes may need fluid, adjusting or replacement.

6. Buckle up, and don't drink and drive. Make sure that everyone in your vehicle is correctly secured in safety belts or child safety seats. ■

ROAD & REC

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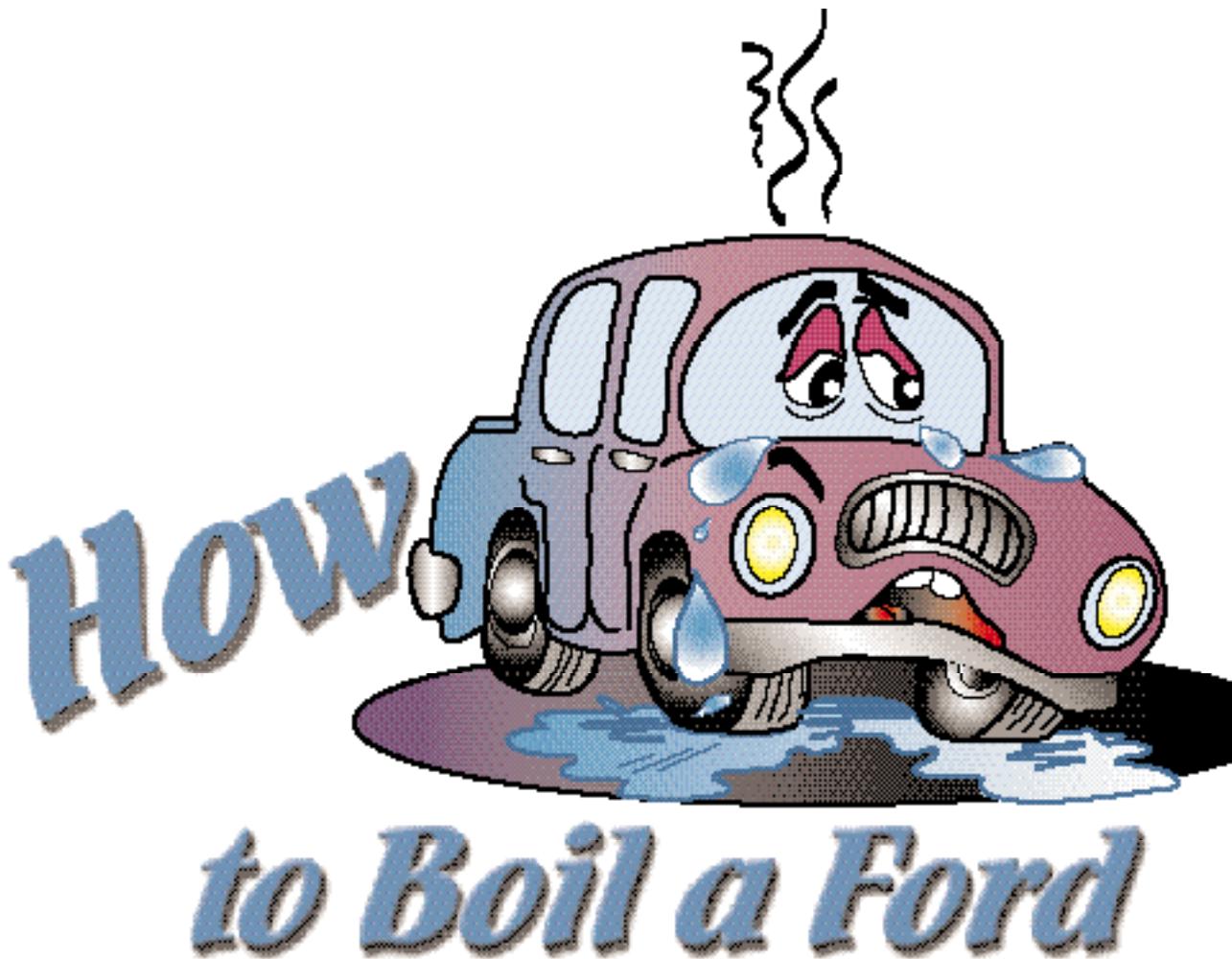
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Managing Editor

Take an old used car and drive it month after month using the maintenance philosophy, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Add a strong dose of neglect by failing to check and replace components, such as radiator hoses, that were never intended to last the life of the vehicle. Simmer these ingredients under your hood during a hot summer day. When the steam rises, serve one boiled engine.

My 1966 German-made Ford Taunus station wagon was a typical "GI clunker." The 9-year-old car was all I could afford as a newly-married Army E-4 stationed in Schweinfurt, Germany. Still, the car did have its good points. At times its "battleship-gray" paint looked official enough to confuse the gate guards. Thinking perhaps a Navy staff car was entering the base, the guards would often begin to salute — that is, until they saw my enlistee rank. Still, temporarily befuddling the guards gave me some satisfaction as I drove the old Ford.

What was less satisfying, however, was realizing that my car needed repairs I couldn't afford. Opting for the "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" mode, I was fortunate during the first year I owned the car that nothing broke so badly that I couldn't jury-rig a repair and limp home. However, that

was all about to change.

One Saturday morning while I was stopped at a light in downtown Schweinfurt, something like a giant steam cleaner exploded under my hood. White clouds poured out of the engine compartment and even billowed out of the wheel wells. Now **I** was befuddled. I ran the short mental checklist I'd acquired as a shade tree mechanic. "Hmmm ... it's not an engine fire because the smoke isn't black. It's not an exhaust leak — if it were, I'd sound like a B-17 on a takeoff roll." Then it hit me! "Voila — it must be a coolant leak!" — a deduction reinforced by the fact that the temperature gauge needle was fast moving toward the red.

Recognizing Fords do not do well on air-cooling alone, I shut off the ignition. With help from another motorist, I pushed my car out of the street and into a parking lot. Waiting for several minutes for the eruption under the hood to subside, I released the latch, raised the hood, and quickly stepped back. Two things were immediately evident; at least one of my radiator hoses had ruptured, and, given the proper lack of maintenance, it **is** possible to boil a Ford.

This was NOT the kind of breakdown where I could jury-rig a repair and limp home. Nothing would suffice short of replacing all of the hoses and filling the coolant system with the proper mixture of antifreeze and water. At least I was in town and knew where to get the parts I needed.



Have your car's coolant system checked annually.

Had this happened while I was on the autobahn or on a long trip, I could have been stranded and possibly faced with much greater repair costs.

To keep you from repeating my experience, here are some tips from the June 1997 issue of **Safedriver**, published by the National Safety Council.

- Check your coolant level regularly. On most modern vehicles you can do this by checking the fluid level in the coolant recovery tank, normally located next to the radiator. It's important to check your fluid level often because a slow leak can go unnoticed at first. According to Phil Doddridge, assistant manager for Made In Japan Auto Care in Albuquerque, N.M., it's also possible to have a slow leak without having a telltale puddle under your car. He explained that some leaks may occur only when the engine is running and circulating water through the coolant system. Under these circumstances, coolant leaking from one of the hoses or the water pump can dribble back along the engine and evaporate without ever falling to the ground.

- Inspect your radiator hoses for cracks or bulges and feel them for firmness. A good hose will feel similar to a garden hose. Signs of wear include a spongy or very hard hose.

- Check the radiator and heater hose clamps. If they're rusty, replace them.

- Inspect the radiator fan belt (if your car has one) and the water pump drive belt for cracks and fraying. A loose or broken belt means water won't be pumped to the engine or the fan won't draw air through the radiator.

- Flush and change the radiator coolant at the mileage intervals listed in your vehicle's scheduled maintenance manual. Use coolants that have corrosion inhibitors to prevent rust, aluminum phosphate and other deposit buildups. ■

Note: Information for this article was reprinted with permission from **Safedriver**, published by the National Safety Council, 1121 Spring Lake Drive, Itasca, Ill.



A worn-out hose will often make a crackling sound when squeezed.



Worn-out coolant can corrode cooling system parts.



Make sure the coolant level is above the "minimum" line on the coolant recovery tank.

Nowhere to Go ...



BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Photos by Bob Van Elsberg

You've often heard how a motorcycle can maneuver quickly to avoid trouble in the road. But what happens when every avenue of escape is cut off? Then it's the rider's skills in surviving the inevitable, along with wise choices in personal protective wear, that tips the scale in favor of survival. During the Fourth of July holiday last year, Capt. Scott Sims, a C-130 pilot with the 50th Airlift Squadron at Little Rock AFB, found himself headed for a collision he could not avoid. Here is his story.

Arkansas Highway 60 is a two-lane country road that winds through pleasant, verdant farm country. Gentle rolling hills and easy sweeping curves make it the kind of road motorcyclists seek out for pleasure rides. Here and there a side road from a farm or country home enters the highway. At first glance the leisurely traffic on the road would seem in keeping with the relaxed surroundings. But for Sims, taking advantage of a day off to enjoy a morning ride on his Honda VTR 1000, the peaceful surroundings would ultimately prove deceiving.

"The weather was beautiful — it was going to be a typical clear-sky Arkansas hot day," Sims said. "I got up early to go out and ride for a few hours. That way I could



be back by 10 a.m. before the temperatures got too hot."

He decided to take one of his favorite jaunts, riding from his home in Little Rock to Petit Jean State Park, located about an hour west of the city. As he prepared for the morning's ride, Sims donned a cordura motorcycle suit having extra protection built into the knees, shoulders and hands. He also put on a pair of leather boots and gloves, and then finished by strapping on his full-face helmet. He learned to dress that way from friends he met when he first began riding a street bike. "They dressed for safety reasons," he said. "It doesn't take a very high-speed spill to shred a bunch of skin."

Sims hit the road just as the sun began to peek over the

horizon to the east. With the sun at his back, he enjoyed the cool morning air and the smells of the woods around him. After cruising through the park and taking a scenic ride on Highway 7, he turned around to begin the return leg of his trip. He passed through the park and was perhaps a half-hour from home when he saw a vehicle ahead in the road.

"I came up on him gradually — he was probably doing about 50 mph, which was about 10 mph under the speed limit," Sims said. "I eventually gained on him, and about that time we came upon a straightaway with a passing zone."

The straightaway stretched for at least a mile. With no oncoming traffic in view, Sims believed he had plenty of room to move into the oncoming lane and pass the vehicle.

"I blinkered — I always use my blinkers — and pulled out to the left, slowly accelerating," he said. "It was a lazy, gentle pass as I pulled alongside the vehicle. No one was coming from the other direction. It was just me and the vehicle and a car that was a ways behind me."

As Sims pulled alongside the vehicle, he noticed a gravel road ahead on the left. The road came out of a wooded area about 30 feet off Highway 60 and intersected it in a "T." Suddenly, something caught his attention.

"A pickup came out of the trees on the road," he said. "As I saw the pickup coming out of the woods, I put my fingers over the clutch and brakes. I was hoping the pickup would stop because there was not a lot I could do at that point."

By the time the pickup reached the intersection, Sims was less than 100 yards away. At the speed he was going, he would be there in a matter of seconds. His eyes were fixed on the pickup's front wheels. If they were turning, it meant the vehicle was pulling into the lane right in his path.

The wheels kept turning! The driver had reached the intersection and looked left — but not right — before pulling out. The pickup was already in the lane turning toward Sims when the driver saw him and hit the brakes — but by then it was too late. With the pickup blocking the lane in front of him and the vehicle to his right, Sims began to move toward the left shoulder.

"At that point I let off the throttle and started getting on the brakes," he said. "The only hope I had was to take the ditch on the left side of the road and miss the pickup by going behind it."

But it wasn't to be. With the front brake heavily loaded, the bike did not want to turn. Also, a short distance ahead in the ditch was a culvert, effectively blocking his last avenue of escape. Now collision with the pickup was inevitable. Sims knew his best chance for survival was to get away from his motorcycle before the impact.

"I had a choice," he said. "I could go from 30 mph to zero mph instantly as I slammed into the side of the pickup, or I could jump off the bike and let it take the impact while I slowed more gently, rolling across the pavement onto the grass. I knew that was the better option."

Sims knew he would have to leap and clear the truck —

continued on next page

an Evel Knievel-type jump but **WITHOUT** the motorcycle. However, he had at least one thing in his favor.

"Fortunately, I was riding a sports bike," he said. "The handlebars were a bit lower than on other types of bikes and the foot pegs were a bit higher." This, he explained, put him in "a perfect jumping position." "Your legs are already bent, they're right under you and you've got a slight lean forward — all you have to do is extend your legs. I knew that the height of the back of the pickup wasn't going to be a problem ... all I had to do was jump three feet or so to get over the truck."

Sims described what happened next.

"When I jumped, I thought I was totally clear of the bike and truck, so it was just going to be a clean sail through the air before I hit the ground," he said. "However, once I extended and pushed away from the bike, something caught my feet. I don't know whether it was the bike's fairing or a mirror — but something caught me and started me rotating head-over-heels through the air."

His tumbling flight ended about 20 feet on the other side of the pickup. To this day, he cannot remember exactly how he landed.

"All I know is that I felt the impact, I don't know whether I impacted on my shoulder, my back, my butt, or my knees," he said. "Of course, once I hit the ground, I continued to tumble ... I felt like Raggedy Anne flip-flopping down the road. I think it was God's grace that I was fortunate enough to not sustain any injuries other than a broken collarbone. I was conscious through the whole thing — my eyes were open. Of course, all I saw was ground-sky — ground-sky — ground-sky. I came to a stop in the ditch."

He landed face-up with his feet toward the top of the ditch and his head toward the bottom — not a very comfortable position.

"I put my arms behind me to slide myself up a little to elevate my head and shoulders. As I went to put my arms behind me to push back, I felt my shoulder grind and I felt movement in my shoulder. I was in a lot of pain. At that point I knew my shoulder was broken or dislocated."

Taking stock of his condition, Sims recognized that it could have been much worse.

"I've got hands — I'm thinking — I'm talking — I can see — thank God I'm alive! OK, so I've got a broken shoulder, that's fine, I'll take a broken shoulder. At least I've got all of my limbs. I was happy at that point."

He continued, "I took my left hand and raised my visor so I could see. I didn't lift my head or take off my helmet in case I had spinal injuries — I was going to let the ambulance take care of all of that. So I lay there."

As he lay in the ditch, a person — possibly the pickup's driver — came over and asked him if he was OK and offered to call the police. A few moments later, the driver of the vehicle he'd tried to pass — a man named Chuck — came over to check on Sims.

"He asked me, 'Are you OK?' and I answered, 'Yeah, I'm doing pretty good.'" He just shook his head and



Sims saw the pickup reach the intersection, then begin turn the shoulder in hopes of missing the pickup. It was not to be

said, 'You almost made it. You were almost around me when that truck pulled out in front of you.' I asked him, 'Is the pickup still there — don't let it leave. I need you as a witness.'

Chuck did stay, joined shortly thereafter by a woman whose husband worked for the Conway Fire Department.

"She stayed with me until the police and the ambulance got there," he said. "I didn't move at all. I didn't move my head or take off anything other than my gloves."

The police got to the accident scene quickly. An officer assured Sims that an ambulance was on the way and took his statement on what happened. About 15 minutes later the ambulance arrived and the paramedics put Sims on a stretcher and transported him to Conway Regional Hospital. There, a doctor X-rayed his shoulder and told him he had a broken collarbone. Fortunately, he did not need to have the bones reset, so the doctor put Sims' arm in a sling and released him. After seeing the flight surgeon the next duty day, Sims was sent to a specialist who put him in a special brace. He ended up with seven days of quarters to recuperate from his injury.

What made the difference between a week on quarters



g onto the highway without stopping. Seeing that the driver never looked his way before pulling out, Sims began to move to

and serious, possibly fatal, injuries? Sims believes it was three things; training, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and experience.

"The Motorcycle Safety Foundation's riders courses do a great job of providing two things," he said. "First, they provide the basic riding skills. That's needed because there are a lot of incorrect riding techniques out there. Second, they do a good job of identifying the hazards motorcyclists commonly face."

He added, "PPE is incredibly important. I slid across the highway and got abrasions on my gloves that would have taken the flesh off my hands." He added that the damage to his protective riding suit would've been serious road rash had his skin scraped along the road. And then there was his helmet. "It's pitted and scraped — but that would have been my skull had I not worn my helmet."

When it comes to experience, he said that one of the things that has helped him most is talking to other riders and learning from their accidents." A couple of years ago, I read an e-mail from a guy who wound up in the hospital because he 'T-boned' a car that turned left in

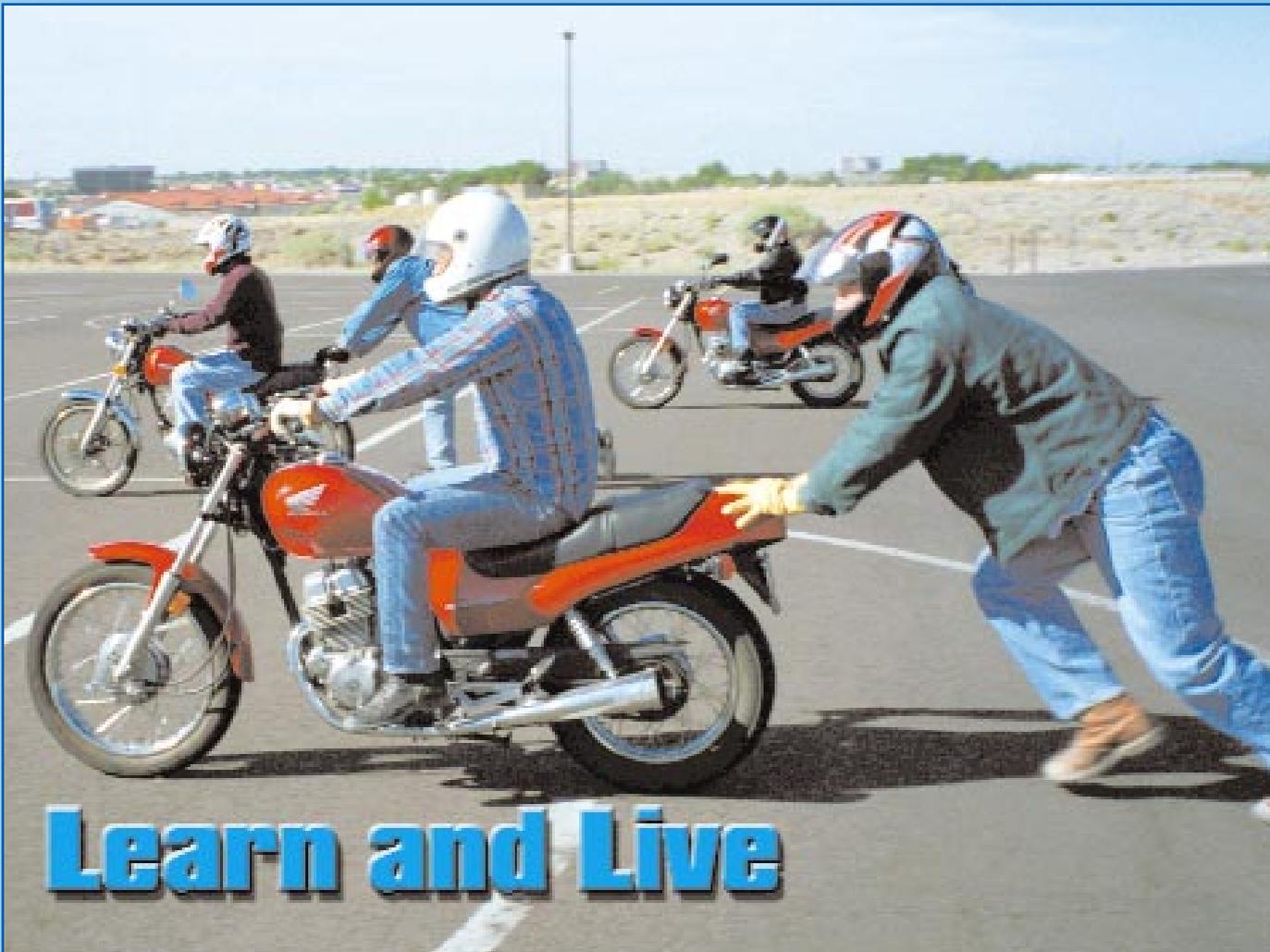
front of him. He didn't jump off the bike — he stayed on it and hit the car. He had two broken legs; several broken ribs and some back injuries. As I was reading his story, I thought, "There has got to be a better way to live through an accident like this."

That e-mail got Sims thinking about what he would do in a similar situation.

"I pictured myself riding and having a car pull out in front of me," he said. "If I could just get away from the bike ... get away from the crashing metal and breaking glass and let my body slow down more gently somewhere other than at the point of impact."

His accident hasn't changed his love for riding and he now has a new sports bike. However, his experience that July morning left him a more wary rider.

"You have to ride as if you're invisible — as if no one sees you," Sims said. He added, "I'm very cautious now when I'm on a straightaway behind another vehicle. Before I pull out to pass, I look to see if there are intersecting roadways. If there are, I'm not going to pass unless it's clear and I can see **WAY** back off the right of way." ■



Learn and Live

Motorcycle Safety Foundation training can make you a safer rider — but only if you remember to use the skills you've learned.

MSGT DAVE HEMBROFF
97 AMW Senior Motorcycle Safety Instructor

Well, "It's happened again," I said to myself as I pulled up my e-mail. Here is another story about a motorcyclist who chose a spectacular way to exit this world.

It's the same old story. First sunny day in a month, no safety gear and excessive speed — all these came together in a spectacular way. The rider was moving quickly down a congested two-lane road, passing cars and semis with verve and panache, when he pulled into the oncoming lane to find — gasp! — oncoming traffic. According to the reports, the car he was passing moved to the right to allow him back into the lane. However, it seems he froze, hitting an oncoming pickup so hard that he lost his left arm and leg and tore off the pickup's left

front wheel. Whether he died on impact or very shortly thereafter isn't known.

As a Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) instructor and webmaster of the SouthWestRider.com web site, I see a lot of this kind of thing. All too often it is our own fault as motorcyclists that we are seen as foolhardy road menaces. Motorcycles don't kill — they are complex machines made of metal and plastic. They are inert and benign without a rider. So what is it that makes motorcycling dangerous?

The answer is two-sided. On one side it's automobile drivers who pull out in front of us, cut us off in traffic, or make left turns right in front of us. They make motorcycling a defensive activity. Any rider will tell you so. Cars are bigger than us and outnumber us on the road. So, we must be smart, very aware, and use all of our skills to see accidents "coming" and avoid them. When we don't do that, we become the

other side of the problem.

Motorcycle safety training will do you no good if you don't practice the skills you've learned so that they're instinctive when you need them. The rider at the start of this story was MSF-trained — but he failed to use his training. He not only rode beyond the limits of the road and his skill, he also became target fixed — never swerving or using his brakes.

When I teach the MSF course I use an example of a rider who, when an oncoming car turns into his path, slams on his brakes and skids almost 30 feet into the car's side. Whose fault is this accident? Legally, it's the driver of the car. However, try telling that to the rider's widow — it'll make her feel so much better. Legal right-of-way means nothing if you're in a cast or a casket. A rider's body **hurts**, a car's body **dents**.

All in all, I'd rather skip the legalities and remember how to brake effectively.

Motorcycle accident data shows that a rider's inability to stop or swerve often contributes significantly to an accident. Also, riders often "see" an accident about to happen but do nothing to avoid it. When this happens, they're a large part of making that accident a reality. The MSF basic rider course stresses a five-step process referred to as SIPDE to keep this from happening. We're taught to **SCAN** for hazards, **IDENTIFY** them, **PREDICT** what they may do, then **DECIDE** on and **EXECUTE** a safe plan of action. I often tell my students that we are much more maneuver-

able than everything else on the road. We **can** get out of our own way.

The bottom line is that while I can give you the MSF training needed to avoid an accident, you have to remember it, practice it, and most of all, use it.

Riders:

- Have you been professionally trained in a certified course? If not, your chances of being in an accident resulting in injuries are NINE times that of trained riders.

- Did you take the basic course only? There are advanced courses available in every state and most provinces as well. Reduce your risk as you sharpen your skills. In the military, the MSF Experienced Rider Course is free, and usually held on a monthly basis. What do you have to lose?

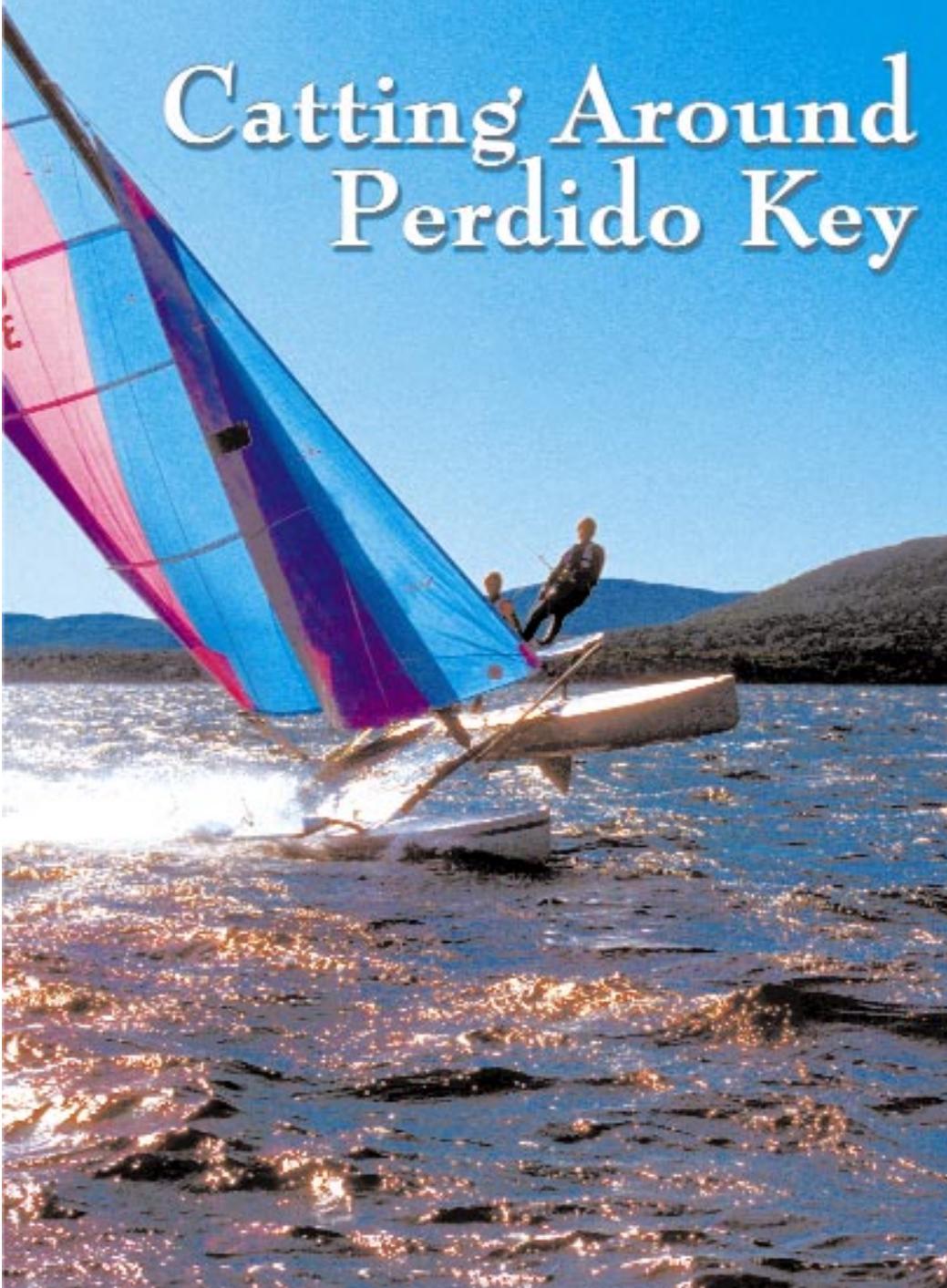
- Do you **remember** all the techniques you learned in the rider course you did take? If so, do you practice them regularly? The MSF and several other motorcycle safety organizations recommend a refresher every two years for all cyclists. Everybody develops bad habits over time. Maybe it is time to have those habits trained out of you.

It all comes down to whether or not you want to be a motorcycle rider. If you want to be a rider, you owe it to yourself to get all the training available to you and practice it every time you ride. The alternative — not being a rider because you're severely injured or dead — is no alternative at all. ■

Photos by Bob Van Elsberg



Catting Around Perdido Key



LT CRAIG NEWTON
From *ASHORE*, Summer 1995

My roommate, Chris, said the winds were strong and perfect and he had to get out on the water with the catamaran he had bought four months earlier. He wanted me to go along to experience the thrill of gliding on the warm

waters of Pensacola's Perdido Key.

He knew I wasn't a big fan of sailing, but he was determined. "I can't sail it alone," he said, and I couldn't find an excuse. At the beach, we rigged the sail and pushed the boat across the sand into the tepid Gulf water. We strapped on our life vests, slathered on the sun block, and away we went.

Even though Chris was an experienced sailor, he didn't feel com-

fortable enough to skipper his new vessel out of sight of land. We watched the homes, condos and weekly-rental apartments glide by in rapid succession as we crisscrossed the waves.

Then we hit a trough and the cat took a dive. I think Chris saw it coming. "Hold on!" was all he had time to yell. The boat capsized and we were both in the water. "You all right?" he asked.

"No sweat," I replied. "Let's get this thing righted and head back."

That's when the real "fun" began. Our momentum and the waves had driven the mast underwater. The sail was mostly submerged and held a large pocket of water — which weighed a lot. Trying to right the cat was not going to be easy. A half-hour later, we were still struggling.

We didn't panic or do anything stupid like diving under the submerged sail, which could have trapped us. The Gulf was like bath water — no fear of hypothermia. We were both strong swimmers. We were wearing life vests. Besides, the beach was a short distance away, right? Well, not exactly.

After trying to right the cat, I looked back at the shore. The buildings weren't as close to us as they had been. We had been drifting. Another 30 minutes and we would probably lose sight of land.

All I could think about was righting that boat. Rocking our weight on the elevated pontoon of the cat was not enough. Trying to raise the mast (with its submerged sail) out of the water was futile. With nothing but water beneath our feet, pushing up on the mast just drove us into the water.

After 10 more minutes, we gave up. Chris decided to leave his prized boat drifting slowly toward the caribbean. We began the long swim to shore.

Ironically, abandoning the catamaran is what let us recover it. As we swam, we came across a pair of vacationers testing their sea legs in a small sailboat. They had not spotted our capsized cat, and probably wouldn't have at the course they were on. We climbed aboard, and

the four of us sailed back to the cat. We righted it in about two minutes. The combination of more weight for leverage on the elevated pontoon, plus standing on the solid base of the sailboat while we were raising the mast and sail, made short work of the problem. We all hopped back into the sailboat and towed the wounded cat to shore.

While Chris treated our rescuers to pizza and a tour of the Naval Aviation Museum, I sat on the porch and thought about our day. Chris was an experienced boater, the weather was perfect and we were strong swimmers. Nothing should have gone wrong — yet, something did.

The precautions we took, just in case something went wrong, were what saved our lives.

We wore life vests. For Chris, life jackets for everyone is as much a part of sailing as the mast and the sail. He never lets anyone get on the boat without one.

We knew our limits. Yes, Chris

was a veteran sailor. He was experienced in several kinds of small sailing craft and had sailed them in all kinds of weather and waters. But the catamaran was relatively new to him. He'd taken it out maybe 20 times before that day. He also knew enough about his hobby to know that this was a fast boat with less margin for error than others he had sailed. So we had stayed close to shore — an excellent decision that guaranteed a visual reference for navigation and a safe “out” should things get ugly.

We continually assessed the situation. Maybe it was luck, fatigue or instinct that made us look up from our efforts trying to right the boat. When we did, we realized the situation had changed and could change again. We recognized the potential hazard that our boat's drift presented. We recognized the hazard when we found we were drifting and implemented controls (“Hey, keep an eye on that blue building. When it

disappears, we've gotta get out of here!”) and supervised our progress (“The building's gone. We're outta here!”) We were using ORM before we even knew what ORM was.

If only one or two things had changed in this story, we might not have made it back alive. For instance, if we had been in Newport, R.I., instead of Pensacola, the water temperature would have been very cold. Imagine if we had been drinking or if we hadn't worn our life preservers. What if we had lost sight of the coastline, and weren't sure which direction led back to the shore? We might have ended up in the Navy Safety Center's mishap summaries.

We did learn from our experience. Chris kept his boat out of the water on those “perfect” wind days until he'd gotten more experienced with it. He also never takes out his boat without a crew of three (giving him enough weight to overturn a cap-sized cat). And I learned that I prefer golf to sailing. ■



WATER SPORTS CAN BE DANGEROUS

PEOPLE HAVE DROWNED IN THIS LAKE THIS YEAR. SOME OF THE CAUSES OF THESE DEATHS ARE:

- ALCOHOL/DRUGS
- NO LIFE JACKETS
- HIGH WINDS
- TRIED TO SWIM TOO FAR
- CRAMPS
- INABILITY TO SWIM

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE DROWNED SINCE THE LAKE WAS OPENED IN 1975 ARE 21

YOUR SAFETY OUR CONCERN



US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT



Swimming Safety Tips

MSGT JAMES C. MULLIS
HQ AFSC/SEG

Last year eight Air Force members drowned during water-related “recreational activities” and one member drowned after his automobile overturned in a creek. Drowning has become the second most likely cause of accidental death for Air Force members, surpassed only by motor vehicle mishaps. Water-related activities such as swimming, boating and scuba diving pose a very real and severe danger to our personnel. Fortunately, this danger can be greatly reduced if we follow a few simple water safety guidelines provided by the American Red Cross.

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around water is to learn to swim. Also, always swim with a buddy — **NEVER** swim alone.

- Swim in only supervised areas.
- Obey all rules and posted signs.

- Watch out for the “dangerous too’s” — too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.

- Don’t mix alcohol and swimming. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance and coordination. It also affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body’s ability to stay warm.

- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.

- Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies.

Four of last year’s eight “recreational activity” drownings occurred while the member was swimming. In all four of these mishaps the members were clearly not thinking about the risks they were facing or the tragic outcome that was about to take place. In each mishap one or more of the Red Cross’s basic water safety guidelines

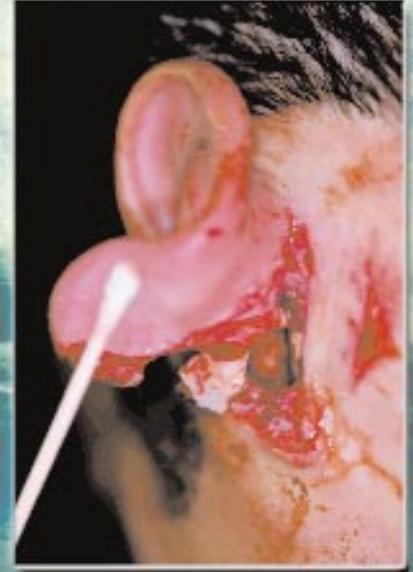
was ignored. All four members were swimming in unsupervised areas (without lifeguards present). Three of the four cases involved the use of alcohol and in two cases the members were swimming alone, (number one on the list of swimming “don’ts”).

Of the four additional drownings, two occurred while members were on fairly high-risk scuba dives. One diver became entangled in kelp while deep water diving and another became disoriented while cave diving. The final two drownings were completely unrelated to the rest: one occurred when a member slipped on a rock while sightseeing and was swept over a waterfall, while the final mishap occurred when a member who was canoeing (without wearing a personal flotation device) was thrown into rapidly flowing water and struck a rock.

The high severity of water-related mishaps (i.e., death) demands a proactive approach toward water survival and is a prime opportunity to apply risk management. Through risk management you can reduce both the likelihood and severity of mishaps. This is done by identifying the potential hazards before swimming, boating, or diving and looking for ways to eliminate or reduce those hazards. As a minimum you should know and obey the basic guidelines for water safety. Next you should identify any hazards specific to the local area, including the possibility of rip tides/currents, rough surface and severe weather. **Think prevention:** if the risk is too great, don’t go in the water. **Think risk management:** if an activity requires personal protective equipment, use it. Swim only in designated areas, don’t drink and swim, practice the buddy system and absolutely **NEVER** swim alone. ■

For additional information on water safety visit the Air Force Safety Center’s web site at: <http://safety.kirtland.af.mil/afsc/rdbms/ground/ground.html>.

Afloat & Alive!



BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

First-time beginner's (bad) luck? – For SrA Jeromy Rupert, a young airman always looking to push the outside of the envelope, his first experience on a jet ski taught him a lifetime worth of lessons. It was a lifetime he almost didn't get to enjoy.

It was a beautiful summer day on Carlyle Lake, located about 40 miles east of Scott AFB, Ill. A slight breeze eased the early summer heat, making the first Saturday in June last year perfect for picnicking at the lake. Jeromy and his girlfriend Brianne decided to double date with Jenny and Tony, friends of Brianne's. The guys were especially looking forward to the day at the lake. Neither had ever been jet skiing, and they were both itching to give it a try. Since Brianne's family owned a pair of jet skis, the guys kept pestering her to let them go riding. Finally, they got their way. When they arrived at the lake, Jeromy was excited.

"When they put the jet skis into the water and started them, I couldn't wait to get on the thing," he said.

The foursome had driven out to Carlyle Lake, and then decided to jet ski out to an island in the middle of the lake. Knowing Jeromy hadn't ridden a jet ski before, Brianne decided that she would "drive" with Jeromy riding on the back as they went out to the island. And experience wasn't her only safety concern. Jeromy had

planned to ride the jet ski without wearing a life jacket. An excellent swimmer, he didn't think that he needed it — but, Jeromy explained, Brianne insisted.

"She said, 'Jeromy, you don't have a life jacket on — you gotta wear a life jacket!' I said, 'I'm a proficient swimmer and I DON'T need a life jacket!' Then she said, 'It's illegal!' so I said, 'OK' and went back to the truck and got the life jacket."

It might have seemed like nagging at the time, but Brianne's insistence would pay off later that day.

The foursome quickly got to the island and then realized they'd forgotten to bring their beach umbrellas. The guys "volunteered" to jet ski back across the lake to retrieve them. It was just the opportunity Jeromy and Tony were looking for. As they headed back toward the shore, they could not resist the temptation to play with their new "toys."

"Thirty seconds into the ride both my friend and I looked at each other and thought, 'This is awesome.' We were having a blast! One of the jet skis (the one ridden by Tony) was really big and it was a lot faster, the other jet ski was smaller and more maneuverable," Jeromy said.

"The first thing I wanted to do was a 'doughnut.' It threw me off the first time," Jeromy said. This clued the neophyte jet skier to the fact he would have to do a better job of hanging on during swift maneuvers.

The guys reached the shore and picked up the umbrellas, then jet skied back to the island. With their appetite for excitement whetted, the guys were anxious



to go back out on the lake.

"Tony said, 'Well, that was FUN!' so we went back out again and rode around", Jeromy explained. "When we came back Brianne said, 'You guys are riding TOO CLOSE together!' But our attitude was like, 'We know what we're doing out there, we're fine.' We waited a few more minutes and then we went back out again and had some fun."

However, the fun was about to end. On their third time out on the lake, inexperience caught up with enthusiasm. As the two jet skiers raced across the water, Jeromy zigzagged his slower but quicker-turning jet ski to try and keep Tony from splashing him.

"He was coming up behind me to try and splash me and I was going back and forth," Jeromy said. Tony used his superior speed to rapidly overtake Jeromy — but then things went very wrong. "When Tony turned left, he hit my wake and his jet ski flew up into air. The jet ski spun counterclockwise and the back of the jet ski clipped my head."

The impact knocked him senseless. "I remember getting jarred and thinking something was wrong. I thought, 'This is big — whatever just happened was big,'" Jeromy said. "Tony said that after he hit me, he turned back around and was looking at me when I stood up on the jet ski and fell face-first into the water."

Jeromy was unconscious.

"He thought I was just falling into the water and playing around — perhaps thinking, 'Oh no, we're in trouble (with our girlfriends) now!' Then he circled back around and saw me facedown in the water. That's when he knew that something was wrong," Jeromy said.

Tony rode his jet ski next to Jeromy, moving his injured friend's face up out of the water so he could breathe. Tony tried unsuccessfully to take his unconscious friend to the shore.

"He pulled me onto the back of his jet ski and took off for the shore, but I fell back into the water ... He realized it was a lost cause for him to try and haul me on his jet ski, so he jumped into the lake, got my face out of the water and yelled for help."

Fortunately, a boater saw the two jet skiers and took the injured, still unconscious, Jeromy onboard and transported him to the shore. The boater had a cell phone and contacted emergency medical personnel, advising them of the accident.

Jeromy came to after he was brought ashore. When he first regained consciousness, a doctor who happened to

be at the lake was checking his medical condition.

"I woke up and there was a guy leaning over me and checking my vital signs," Jeromy said. I looked at him and I couldn't breathe. I was getting frustrated and wanted to get up but he said, 'No, stay down — stay down!' I rolled over on my side and spit out a bunch of water. He said, 'Don't get up!' I asked him, 'What just happened?' He said, 'You were in an accident ... you're bleeding pretty badly from your head. I'm a surgeon. I'm looking at your ear and I think you're going to need some stitches.' There was blood everywhere."

Soon an ambulance arrived to transport Jeromy to the hospital. Brianne, who had seen the accident and come across the lake from the island to the shore, rode in the front while Jeromy rode in the back. When he got to Breese Hospital he received more extensive treatment.

"At the hospital they did a CAT scan and checked for neck injuries," Jeromy said. "They were really apprehensive about even touching my ear. They said I might have to have plastic surgery to have it reattached."

Jeromy's left ear was badly torn. The tear began at the middle of the back of his ear, then came all the way down and forward and over the earlobe. Only the upper part of his ear was still attached. The doctors where he was being treated could not repair his ear, so they suggested a couple of hospitals, including the one at Scott AFB — right next to the dental clinic where Jeromy works.

"I decided to go to Scott. That way I wouldn't have to mess with a lot of paperwork. I could just go right in and they would treat me," he said.

He was seen by Lt. Cdr. Alan Lim, a Navy doctor assigned to Scott. He gave Jeromy the first good news he'd had in awhile.

"He looked at my ear and said, 'Yeah, I can sew it right up — no problem!' He did it right there in the ER."

It wasn't a pleasant process.

"That hurt — that was real pain," Jeromy said. Explaining that he hadn't been given anything for the pain at Breese Hospital or at the emergency room at Scott AFB ... "the only thing that I had was when doctor Lim gave me some local anesthesia. We were there a long time. He started operating on me around 9 p.m. and I got out of there at 1 in the morning."

The surgery healed and, fortunately, left little in the way of a scar. However, he's even more fortunate to have been there at all. Jeromy's swimming skills would have been of no help to him when he collapsed unconscious in the lake that day.

"If I hadn't been wearing a life jacket, it's pretty obvious I wouldn't be here right now — I honestly believe that," he said. "I really don't float that well and Carlyle Lake is pretty deep. I think by the time someone would have found me, it would have been a little too late."

Jeromy's one-time experience with jet skiing has left him wiser to its potential dangers.

"First, I'd say wear a helmet." He added, "The main thing, obviously, is to wear a life jacket. Also, stay a safe distance away from other jet skiers. That's VERY important." ■



Original or Extra Crispy?

Photo Illustration by Felicia Moreland

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Strolling down Kalahaua Avenue in Waikiki Beach, I couldn't believe I'd been lucky enough to be stationed in Hawaii. Life here was really laid-back as people strolled in and out of stores clad in shorts and Hawaiian shirts. The tans were something else, too. Although I'd grown up in southern California, I'd rarely seen people with such dark tans.

However, I soon saw there was a downside. While sun worshippers in their teens and 20s looked good with their mahogany-hued skin, the story was different for those who were a bit older. Sun worshippers in their mid-to-late 30s looked like they were prematurely aging. It was unsettling to see otherwise attractive people with wrinkled faces and leathery-looking skin, I thought, "Is this what suntanning does to a person?"

The truth is, the results of too much sun can be worse

than just wrinkled, prematurely old-looking skin. Studies show that one in every five Americans will develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime. In fact, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation, more than 1,000,000 new cases of skin cancer are reported every year in the United States. Sure, it's great to look good at the beach, but is it worth the price you may have to pay later on?

Blondes Don't Always Have More Fun

No one can be outdoors without some risk, but those at greatest danger are people who have fair skin, red or blonde hair, blue or green eyes, freckles and large, numerous, unusual or changing moles. These people typically get sunburns instead of tans and may have a family history of melanoma — a severe, often fatal, form of skin cancer. When they were kids, they often had painful or blistering sunburns.

Everyone Needs Protection

The best advice is abstinence. If that's not realistic, try these suggestions from The Skin Cancer Foundation:

- Avoid direct exposure to the sun between 10 a.m. and



USAF Photo by TSgt Mike Featherston

4 p.m., whether it's sunny or not.

- Limit your time in the sun, regardless of the hour or season.
- Apply a liberal coat of sunscreen a half-hour before going out in the sun. Many people only apply about half as much sunscreen as is needed to offer protection.
- Use a sunscreen with a "sun protection offer" (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- Reapply sunscreen every 60 to 90 minutes; when you come out of the water, and after you perspire.
- Protect yourself by wearing tightly woven clothing, hats with a brim at least three inches wide, and sun glasses.
- Seek the shade.
- Stay away from tanning parlors and artificial tanning devices.
- Protect your children and teach them sun safety at an early age. Studies show that regular use of an SPF-15 sunscreen throughout childhood and adolescence may reduce the risk of the most common skin cancers by 80 percent. However, this is not true of melanoma.
- Be careful around highly reflective surfaces such as water, snow and concrete. Their glare can nearly double your exposure to the sun's rays.
- Some medications increase sensitivity to ultraviolet (UV) light. Check with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Plan sun-smart vacations.

Using The UV Index Ratings

The National Weather Service issues an UV index

daily for 60 American cities. Use the UV index listed below to judge how much sunscreen protection you need.

0 to 2 — apply a 15+ sunscreen. An SPF of 30 is a good idea for light-skinned people when they're at the beach and for children who are outside for long periods.

3 to 4 — Add protective clothing.

5 to 7 — Add UV-blocking sunglasses.

8 to 9 — Shade yourself from the midday sun

10 to 15 — Try to avoid the sun between the hours of 10 a.m. through 4 p.m.

Checking For Skin Cancer

About 80 percent of skin cancers develop on the head and neck. However, you should check your entire body often for any changes or suspicious spots on your skin. Warning signs include:

- ◆ **A**symmetry: One side of a mole doesn't match the other.
- ◆ **B**order irregularity: Ragged, notched or blurred edges.
- ◆ **C**olor: Changes in color from black to brown to red, often with a combination of other colors.
- ◆ **D**iameter: Any mole or spot that grows to more than one-fourth of an inch in diameter.

Also, watch out for any scabs or sores that continue to itch, hurt, crust, erode or bleed. ■

Note: Information for this article was provided courtesy *Safety Times*.



Crashed — But Not Crushed

MAJ BILL KRALIK
HQ AFSC/SEWE

I was going TDY to Vandenberg AFB, Calif., but my flight wasn't until late in the morning. Since I had some time, I asked my wife if she'd like to go with me to the base gym and workout before I left. She agreed, so we hopped into our Ford Windstar van and she started driving toward the base. We were headed south on Tramway Boulevard — a three-lane road with a 50 mph speed limit — when a Jeep Cherokee coming from the opposite direction turned left and cut in front of us. We had no time to stop or maneuver and hit the Cherokee's right front quarter panel.

The crash happened so quickly that nei-

ther of us can remember the actual impact. The first thing I remember seeing after the collision was the deflated airbag in front of me. I thought, "Well, there goes about \$500."

After the crash, we checked each other for injuries and surveyed the damage. Then my wife called the police on her cell phone while I checked the other guy. He was moving, but couldn't get out of his vehicle. So I yanked his door open to help him get out.

Surveying the accident scene, it became clear just how violent the crash had been. We'd spun the Cherokee 180 degrees and it was now facing east. Our Windstar was shattered. The driver's side of the engine compartment was gone and the hood looked like twisted and broken cardboard. The bumper and quarter panel were gone

— shattered and strewn all over the road. By comparison, the damage on the Cherokee didn't look as bad. Only the passenger-side front quarter panel appeared to be damaged. However, there must have been other damage we couldn't see because the vehicle was leaking oil badly.

We were very fortunate not to have been seriously injured. My wife walked away shaken, but without so much as a scratch or bruise. I wound up with a bruised breastbone and minor bruises where my seatbelt restrained me. The driver of the Cherokee fared worse — he had a broken collarbone.

Afterwards, I thought back on an article we'd published in the base paper when I was the 90th Space Wing chief of safety at F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo. The article described an accident that was very similar to ours; however, the injuries were much more severe. The driver suffered multiple broken bones and severe lacerations. The thing I'll always remember, however, was that her teeth were embedded in the steering wheel.

Why was there such a difference between her crash and ours? How could we survive such an impact and be no worse off than if we were playing tackle football?

I believe three factors saved our lives that day.

- First, we were wearing our seatbelts. I've seen a lot of safety reports on privately-owned vehicle mishaps and the majority of the survivors were wearing seatbelts. By contrast, most of those who died or were seriously injured weren't.

- Second, I strongly believe that our airbags saved us from much more severe injuries or even death. Although our van went almost instantly from 50 mph to 0 mph, our bodies were still traveling forward at 50 mph. Our airbags pushed us back into our seats and prevented us from making contact with the steering wheel, dashboard or windshield. Airbags have received a lot of bad press — especially for shorter drivers and occupants. However, although my wife is 5'3" and I'm only 5'8", I would never buy a car without dual airbags. Sure, I took a pretty hard punch in the chest when the airbag deployed. Had my 10-year-old son been sitting where I was, he'd have taken that in his face. However, the answer isn't to avoid airbags, but rather to never allow a child to ride in the front seat of a vehicle



Photos courtesy of author

equipped with airbags.

- Finally, we were in a well-designed vehicle, one that was going to be the primary transportation for our children. We are interested in safety and made that one of our criteria when we chose which vehicle to buy.

As it turned out, we'd made a good choice. Even though our vehicle had suffered terrible damage, the passenger compartment had maintained its integrity. Nothing pushed its way into the space my wife and I occupied — nothing that could crush us or pin us inside the vehicle. Most of the impact energy was absorbed by the components in the frame and engine compartment. Only a fraction of that energy remained to push the engine into the passenger compartment — and it didn't come in far enough to cause us any injuries.

So, what did I learn from this mishap? First of all, wear your seatbelt and wear it properly because it is your first line of defense. Second, for all the bad press they've received lately, airbags do save lives. While it is true that the only significant injury I suffered was from my airbag, our airbags protected us from secondary collisions that could have caused much more severe injuries. Finally, a lot of money is spent gathering safety information on vehicles and most of that information is freely available to consumers. No matter how careful you may be, you can't account for what the other driver may do. Your best bet is to protect yourself. ■

My Dad's No Rocket Scientist



A few summers ago, I scanned the Web for the biggest sky rocket I could get. I located a fireworks importer who had this monstrous skyrocket ... the Sky Dragon. Perfect.

These things are 48 inches tall and are mounted on a half-inch wooden dowel. Pure aerospace engineering.

I plopped down a bunch of money and had him send me two cases. Each box contained 80 rockets. The "Class 4 Explosives" sticker on the side of each box was a real bonus. I'm gonna have to save them for the scrapbook.

That night, the kids and I had a genuine rocket launch ceremony.

I placed one of those beauties in a liter-size glass bottle, and the bottle fell over. Way too big. I'd need a better platform. Finally, I pried up one of the driveway drain grates with a crowbar. Perfect launching pad. It looked sort of like a hardened missile silo. Of course, I did this all covertly as "projectile-type" fireworks are totally illegal in this county.

Countdown begun, I asked which of my three kids wanted to light the fuse. They took a few steps back and politely declined (must take after their mother). So I did the honors.

The fireworks importer promised me these things wouldn't make any noise. I needed them to be relatively quiet so I could shoot them off in my neighborhood without causing "undue alarm" and being visited by the local police.

I launched the rocket.

It soared to about 1,000 feet, then disintegrated into a huge shower of silent red sparks. "Pretty cool," I thought ... until the shower of sparks burned out and suddenly transformed into a cloud of extremely bright and loud explosions.

The kids scrambled into the back door Three Stooges-style and left me standing in the smoking haze waiting for the cops to arrive. Luckily, they never did.

The next day, my oldest son, Doug, and I decided we were gonna "neuter" one of the rockets so it wouldn't make any noise. We proceeded to take it apart.

The rocket was pretty simple. It had a large booster engine topped with a warhead that contained red sparkly things that exploded. After removing the payload, we

tested a rocket. Our modifications added nearly 50 percent to the altitude.

We customized four more rockets. When we were done, Doug had a jar full of stuff that came out of the warheads. It included 12 fuses, some paper, four plastic nosecones and a big handful of little black balls (the poppers) about the size of buckshot.

I didn't want to see the popper thingies go to waste, so I told Doug we were gonna put them in a hole in the ground and set them off. He gave me a big smile. It's amazing how kids think alike ... even when separated by 30 years.

As I was digging a shallow hole with my hand, Doug asked if it would be OK to put an army man next to the explosives. Dang ... exactly what I was thinking! So we added an action figure to the pile of black balls and fuses.

I figured that 3 inches of fuse would take 2 seconds to burn. I squatted next to the soldier and gave a short eulogy. Doug laughed. I took my trusty lighter and placed it next to the fuse. One flick got the lighter going and then an image I'll remember for a long time: my hand holding a lighter next to a pile of explosives.

I had badly miscalculated the fuse burn time. It was in the thousandth of a second range. The pile of little poppers immediately ignited into a tremendously brilliant ball of fire. Unfortunately, when viewed at ground level, these tiny popper thingies become really big popper thingies. They explode 15 feet in every direction. I instantaneously became engulfed in a ball of fire that sounded a lot like being in a half-done bag of Orville Redenbacher's popcorn.

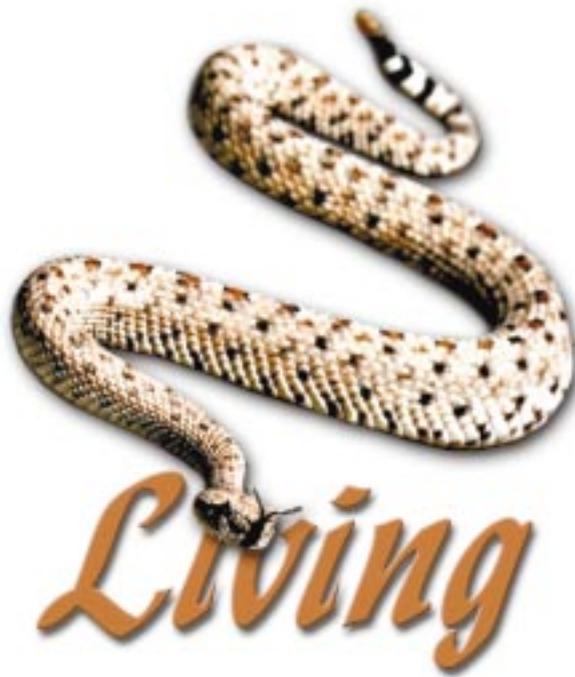
About as fast as I could snap my fingers, it was all over.

After the smoke cleared, Doug started laughing hysterically. That meant I was still in one piece. I checked my clothes for burn marks and amazingly found none. Doug checked my back to make sure it wasn't on fire. No combustion there either.

The driveway was peppered with black holes where the concrete had been scarred from the explosives. The toy soldier wasn't as lucky as me. He looked like he'd been nuked. Doug quietly examined him, then looked at me and probably wondered the same thing I did: How was I not burned beyond recognition?

I hope this vivid image tempers his interest in fireworks. After all, if your dad isn't gonna teach you fireworks safety, who is? ■

Father's
reckless-
ness gets
him singed
by firebar
but his
sons learn
a lesson
they will
never
forget.



Snakes in My Living Room!

MSGT BARBARA J. BOOTH
Reprinted from *Road & Rec*, Summer 1995

We had lived in Florida approximately one month when I saw the first snake. During our introductory briefing, I had been warned they were out there. I just never anticipated seeing one up close — in our living room!

It was a pygmy rattlesnake, so tiny it was able to crawl under the sliding screen door and slither across the carpeted floor. If I hadn't seen it come in, I would never have known it was there.

Luckily, the local area has an animal control office that removes unwanted animals. I got them on the phone right away. They asked me to keep an eye on it until they arrived. Oh sure, I had no problem keeping an eye on it. However, I wasn't as certain it was going to cooperate with their request. I trapped it under a pitcher and waited for the officer to arrive. Within minutes, the snake was taken away to greener pastures,

and we were relieved.

About one week later, we saw a 4-foot-long snake sunning itself under a tree in our backyard. By now, the animal control team and I were becoming fast friends.

We had recently removed some high weeds from our yard. Also, there was new construction going on in the neighborhood. Apparently, the snakes were looking for a new place to live. They are often on the run when their nests are disturbed or their food supply is destroyed by progress. When a housing project begins, rodents, lizards, and birds flee, taking along the snakes which prey upon them.

Military families are always on the move. If you have just moved into a house, it would be wise to check out your neighborhood and take measures to prevent snakes from moving in.

Avoid piling firewood outdoors, if possible. It makes a dark and private place where snakes can breed. Try to store wood in the garage or shed.

Cut down high grass around buildings and children's play areas. Snakes will avoid contact with people if possible. If they can see you, they probably won't be staying. Get rid of

those hiding places.

If your dog finds a snake, try to call the dog away. Many dogs are bitten by snakes each year.

Never bring a snake in from the wild to show off to friends, especially if you aren't sure whether it's poisonous or not. One of my husband's coworkers did that. He thought it would be funny to scare a few of his buddies at work with a full-grown water moccasin he found near a lake during a fishing trip. He didn't stop to consider the snake might bite him or someone else until it happened!

Treat all snakes with respect. Even non-poisonous snakes can attack and bite. Although they aren't deadly, they can hurt you.

If you enjoy the outdoors, wear proper clothing — long pants outside the boot, and high top boots, making it harder for a snake to sink its fangs into you.

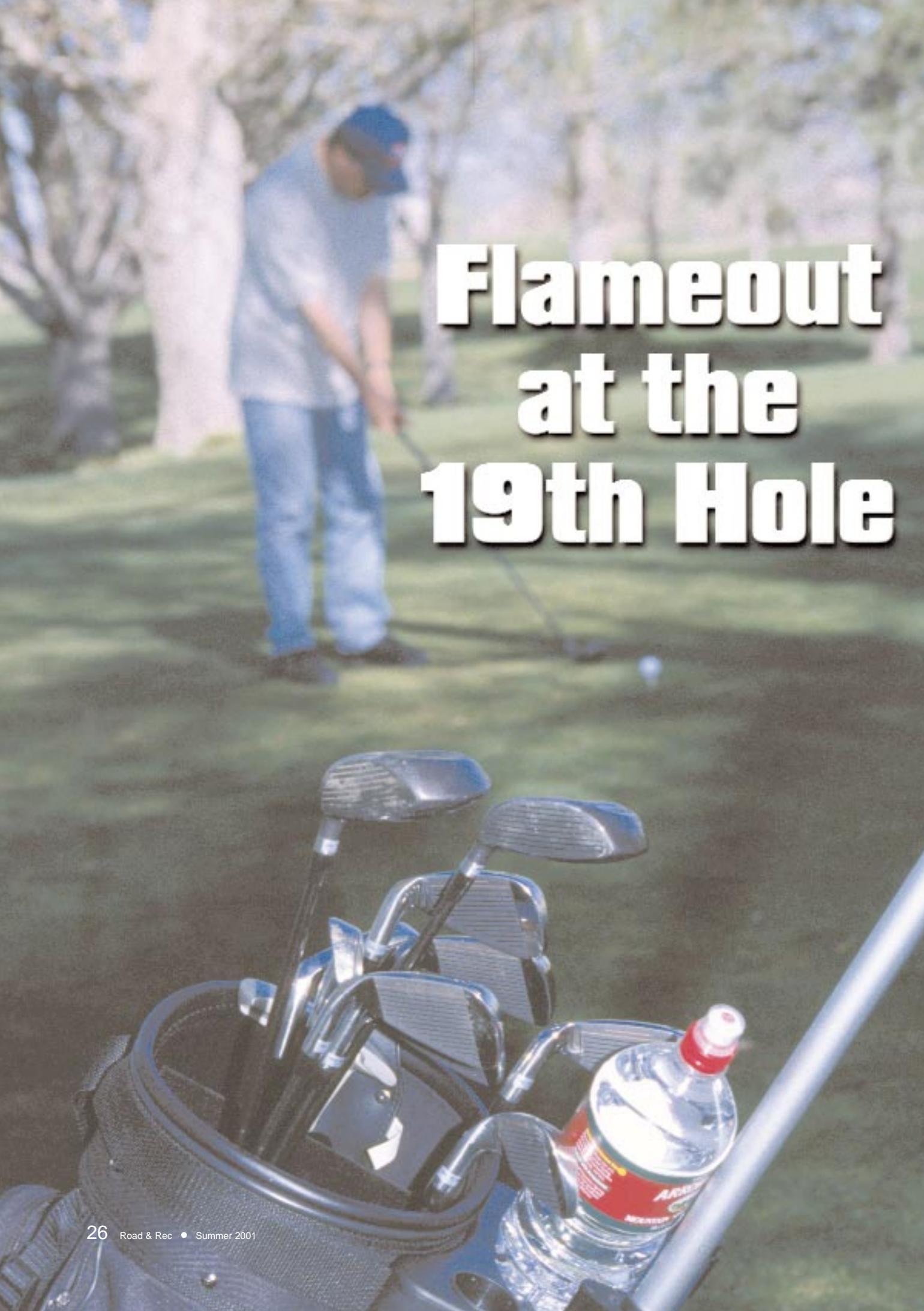
Avoid high grass, putting your hands or feet on or under ledges, rock outcrops, logs, stumps, bushes, or holes where you cannot see.

Become familiar with the types of snakes found in your area. Usually a local library will have some books on the subject.

If you are bitten, seek medical help immediately. ■



Snakes' habitat can be easily disturbed by man and nature and they can be forced to migrate to new areas. Sometimes this will bring us into close encounters of the most stressful kind.



Flameout at the 19th Hole

“Call 911!”

Get an ambulance

lance over here now!” I yelled as I saw my buddy sitting in his chair unconscious and vomiting all over himself. What a way to end 18 holes of golf.

It had been a beautiful Saturday morning when we'd teed up, even though thunderstorms were predicted for the afternoon, and it was going to be 90 degrees Fahrenheit and humid.

We took practice swings while waiting for our fourth player, Jim, to show up. Ten minutes before before our 7:40 a.m. tee-time, he arrived. “Hey, Jim,” I said, “I hope you brought plenty of water with you today. It's going to be a scorcher.”

“No, I didn't,” he replied, as he began hitting a few practice balls.

I ran back to the clubhouse to get a score card and buy Jim a 16-ounce bottle of water. That way, he would have something to drink and a container to fill with more water as we walked the course and carried our heavy bags.

Throughout the 18 holes, we kept warning Jim that he needed to drink lots of water. All the times I've golfed with Jim, he never seemed to drink enough water. He always took small sips, and on this day, I never saw him fill his container once. Near the end of the round—with the temperature and humidity really high—I asked him if he wanted a cold drink from the machines. He said no; he had his water.

We finished the round at noon and, as always, went straight to the 19th Hole for refreshments. We were all hot and relieved to get out of the sun and into an air-conditioned room. A few moments later, we were seated around a table and enjoying a cold one.

By this time, Jim wasn't looking and acting his usual self. I asked him if he was OK. He said he was just hot and tired. I told him he looked as though he needed some water and went to get him a glass. I also got a cold, wet rag to put on his neck.

When I returned to the table, Jim was unconscious and vomiting. According to one of the other golfers, while I was waiting to get served, Jim's eyes had rolled to the back of his head, and he had passed out. While we tried to revive him, I yelled for someone to call 911. After a few moments Jim came to.

While waiting for the paramedics, we put the cold compresses on the back of Jim's neck and gave him water to drink. When the paramedics arrived, they checked Jim's vital signs and asked us what happened. Then they asked him for a short personal history. That's when we found out that Jim had no breakfast that morning—only a cup of coffee. He also didn't drink the full bottle of water I gave him at the beginning of the round.

Jim didn't have a clue that he had fainted and vomited. He was still pale and weak, so the paramedics put



USAF Photos by TSgt Mike Featherston

him on oxygen. That seemed to do the trick. Within minutes, Jim was acting like his old self again. I drove him home. Later, I called Jim and made sure he was OK.

Jim is just like most of us. We think that if we are in good shape, we should be able to do almost anything. What is so tough about walking around a golf course with a golf bag on your back for 18 holes, regardless of the heat?

I learned my lesson about the effects of dehydration 16 years ago during a 70-mile bike race through rolling hills in Mexico. It was a hot day—more than 95 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. I was 29 years old, and both the bike and I were in great shape. Well into the race, I realized I was getting dehydrated. Even though I had eaten a good breakfast and had drunk water, I hadn't had enough water for something as grueling as this. I vomited several times during the last half of the race and felt like I was burning up inside. Looking back, I feel I was lucky to survive.

Jim was fortunate that he got through those 18 holes. We don't know what would have happened if his body had given out on the golf course, away from cold compresses, water or a phone to call for help immediately. If we hadn't gotten his core temperature down rapidly, he could have suffered brain damage or even died.

Drinking plenty of water during hot weather is a must when you are exercising, working in your yard or doing military training—anything outside. Your age and physical condition don't make any difference. You need to drink water before you start your activity, and also during and after. Don't wait until you are thirsty—by then, it may be too late. They don't call water the elixir of life for nothing. ■

(Mr. Mahoney is head of the media department at the Naval Safety Center.)



ATV + Inexperience = Pain!

Photo courtesy of author

AMCS (AW) MIKE CALLAHAN
Courtesy **ASHORE** Magazine

Last summer, I took my wife and kids to Arkansas to visit my family. Since part of my job at the Naval Safety Center is teaching risk management to sailors and Marines, I'm familiar with the process.

During the drive, I got a chance to practice my own personal risk management. We switched drivers, maintained speed limits, and stopped for the night. The trip went well.

Once we arrived, my 14-year-old daughter spied my brother's four-wheeled ATV and was eager to take a ride. She asked my brother if she could ride it. He said, "Sure."

He never thought to ask her if she was familiar with this type of machine, since his own kids ride it frequently. She climbed on and went zooming down the driveway.

My daughter made it to the end of the drive, but when she tried to stop, she *turned the throttle instead of squeezing the hand brake. The four-wheeler slammed into a tree and threw her into it. The rough bark scraped her face. We took her to the hospital where doctors gave us salve to put on her wounds to prevent scarring.

As we were returning from the hospital, we realized we were very lucky. If my daughter had taken the force of the blow against the tree instead of the ATV, she could have been killed.

My daughter (and the rest of my family) learned that day how important it is to assess risks before doing something new. If we had considered these points before she climbed on that ATV, she might never have taken that ride and made that sudden stop.

- Before this incident, my daughter had been on an ATV for only two hours of riding time. And no one had ever really shown her how to ride one.

- She had no idea that she needed protective equipment. She was wearing flip-flops and wasn't wearing a helmet.

- She had the gas and brake confused, which showed how unfamiliar she was with the ATV.

- My brother just assumed that everyone knew how to ride an ATV and didn't supervise his niece's efforts.

Even though we knew the hazards of riding a four-wheeler, we never gave them much thought until our daughter was hurt. **Lesson learned: Risk management doesn't just apply in the military. You need to use it all the time.** ■

* The ATV had been modified to have a twist grip throttle.

Don't Get "Ticked"!

A1C RAY SINCLAIR-WEST
1st Aerospace Medicine Squadron
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Reprinted from *COMBAT EDGE*, June 2000

With the arrival of summer, it is time once again to think about regularly checking your body for ticks. Ticks are not just unappealing insects — they can transmit diseases, including Ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease and even Rocky Mountain spotted fever. In addition, some people can have allergic reactions to the tick bite itself.

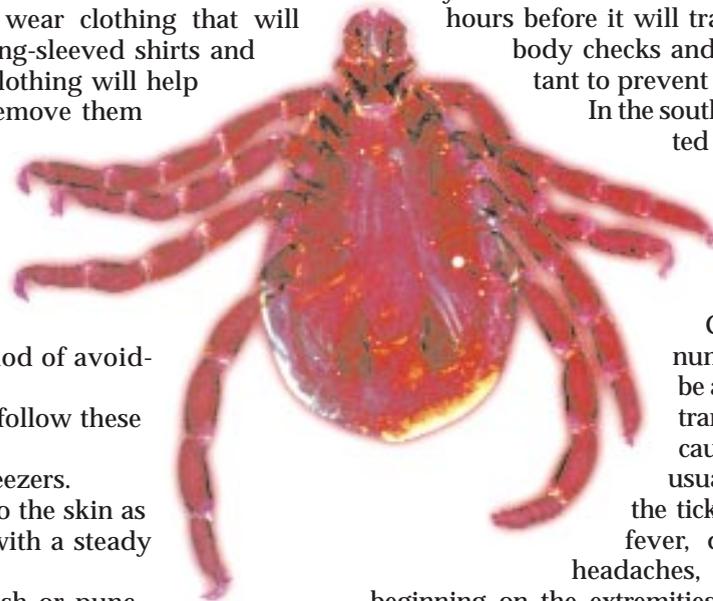
What can you do to avoid these creatures? When going into wooded areas, wear clothing that will cover most of your skin (long-sleeved shirts and long pants). Light colored clothing will help you to spot the ticks and remove them before they reach your skin. Tuck the bottom of your pants into your boots or socks and apply insect repellent that contains DEET around that area and to your exposed skin. Prevention is the best method of avoiding disease.

If you find a tick on you, follow these steps in removing the tick:

- Use blunt forceps or tweezers.
- Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upward with a steady even pressure.
- Try not to squeeze, crush or puncture the tick.
- Do not handle the tick with your bare hands because infectious agents may enter via mucous membranes or breaks in the skin.
- Do not try to kill the tick with alcohol or smother it with lotions or any other such products. This will cause the tick to get agitated and release infectious agents as it tries to escape.
- Likewise, do not try to make the tick detach itself by using extreme heat from a match, lighter, or cigarette as this will most likely cause injury to yourself.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite area with antiseptic and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Try to keep the tick. Place the tick in a small sealed container and bring it to your local Public Health office or primary care manager for identification. If the tick is alive, it can be sent to a lab for testing to see if it does, in fact, carry any infectious bacteria.

One of the most common diseases ticks carry is Lyme disease. The classic initial symptom of Lyme disease is a

small red spot that expands, producing a "bull's-eye" lesion. Some other symptoms of Lyme disease are rashes, muscle and joint aches, stiff neck, fatigue, fever, facial paralysis (Bell's palsy), meningitis, and joint pain or swelling. If you feel you may have Lyme disease, see a physician promptly and get checked. Treatment is with antibiotics. The "deer" tick, which normally feeds on the white-tailed deer and other mammals or birds, is responsible for transmitting Lyme disease bacteria to humans in the northeastern and north-central United States. On the Pacific Coast, the bacteria are transmitted to humans by the western "black-legged" tick. Researchers widely believe the tick must be attached for at least 24 hours before it will transmit disease, so frequent body checks and quick removal are important to prevent disease.



In the southeast, Rocky Mountain spotted fever is transmitted by the "American dog" tick, the "lone star" tick, or the "wood" tick. The disease name is actually a misnomer because North

Carolina reports the highest number of cases. The tick must be attached for 4-6 hours before transmitting the bacteria that cause the disease. Symptoms usually show up 3-14 days after the tick bite, and can include high

fever, deep muscle pain, severe headaches, malaise, and a red rash, beginning on the extremities. Again, if you have these symptoms, you should visit your primary care manager.

Ehrlichiosis, or HME (Human Monocytic Ehrlichiosis), as it is sometimes called, is an emerging disease caused by bacteria, and is believed to be transmitted by the "lone star" tick. Most confirmed cases come from the southeastern and south-central United States, with the most recent cases being reported in the Maryland and Chesapeake Bay areas. Symptoms of the infection include nausea, aches and pains, vomiting, diarrhea, and a nonproductive cough. Any suspicion of HME should be quickly treated by your doctor, even before serological testing confirms infection.

For more information on these diseases, visit the Website www.cdc.gov/ncidod/ and click on vector-borne infectious diseases. Also, find out more about Ehrlichiosis at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/infect/rms.html or at www.cdc.gov/dvrd/disinfo/disease.htm. For more information on Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever go to www.astdhppe.org/infect/rms.html. Check the links for specific information or call your local Public Health office or primary care physician. ■

Fractured Follies

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Not So "Hot" Wheels

You gotta love the creativeness of the toy industry. When all else fails, they can take yesterday's toy ideas, jazz them up for the modern consumer, then market that toy as the newest "rage."

Enter our unsuspecting victim equipped with the latest fad in two-wheeled transportation — the scooter. You know the kind — tiny wheels and almost no ground clearance. They compare to the scooters of yesteryear like a lowrider compares to a jacked-up 4-wheel-drive pickup.

In any case, our victim plants one foot firmly on the scooter, then shoves off with his other foot. Gravity — marvelous thing that it is — does the rest, accelerating our victim down the road.

Ah — to feel the wind in your face and hear the hum of the wheels on the pavement. 'Tis exhilarating indeed. And so it might have remained had it not been for one small thing — or more accurately, one *small hole* in the road. Like a lowrider hitting a pothole, the jolt rudely upset this otherwise serene scene. Faster than you can say, "Jack Flash," the front wheel — joined by the steering handle — did an immediate "right face." This, as you might imagine, was NOT conducive to continued forward movement — at least not on the part of the scooter. However, our rider, firmly in the grasp of momentum, once again proved the old law that says a body in motion tends to remain in motion.

And remain in motion he did, extending his right hand to cushion his return to earth. This might have injured little more than his pride, except that somewhere during this gravity-inspired moment our rider's thumb took a wrong turn and got severely sprained. The injury earned our rider 12 days on quarters — plenty of time to contemplate what happens when tiny wheels encounter even small irregularities in the road.

Combat Cornea

"Whoosh ... splat, you're dead!" — paintball is MUCH more fun than playing with cap guns. After all, the other guy can't say you missed when he's dripping with paint.

Four airmen — three being "newbees" to the sport — decided to become paintball warriors. Laying down their hard-earned cash, they equipped themselves with guns and ammo. However, being a little short on money, the newbees opted to forego purchasing eye/face protection. I mean, who is gonna shoot his buddy in the face?

Not that they didn't *consider* the danger. Prior

to commencing combat, they performed a "ballistic" test on a pull-down full-face shield. Sad to say, the shield — being intended to protect the eyes from being splashed by fluids — broke into three pieces. But, not to worry. After all, who is gonna shoot his buddy in the face?

Now to the woods and "mortal" combat. Pairing up into two teams, our warriors — we'll call them "Mutt and Jeff" and "Mike and Ike" — began looking for ways to ambush each other. Sneaking through the woods, Mutt and Jeff found a sunken bunker covered with camo netting. Approaching to a range of 20 feet, they decided to hose it down — "just in case."

Sure 'nuff, they'd struck pay dirt! Coming under a hail of paintballs, Mike returned fire from inside the bunker. But it was like those old-time westerns where it was volume — not accuracy — that counted. So Mike poked the muzzle of his paintball gun through the camo netting and fired for effect. And, wouldn't you know, he scored a direct hit on Mutt's right headlight!

Mutt went down for the count, holding his right hand over his eye. When the doctor took a look at Mutt's ailing orb, he tallied the following battle damage; a scratched lens, bleeding in the back of eye, and a possible detached retina. Enough damage for nine days on quarters — plenty of time for Mutt to use his GOOD eye to read the bold letters on the paintball gun box. You know, the ones that said, "Warning — this is not a toy ... All person's using this product, or within range while this product is being used, must wear eye protection specifically designed for paintball." ■

Can you see some places where using ORM could have prevented this injury? ORM works — but only if you apply it.



Short Circuits



AUTO RECALLS

The following recalls have been recently announced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

1998-2001 Toyota Camry. Defect: On certain passenger cars built at Toyota's Kentucky plant, the accelerator cable housing could be deformed at the cruise control actuator-to-throttle body connection. The accelerator inner cable could wear away and eventually break, allowing the throttle to return to idle or remain in its most recent position, regardless of accelerator operation. This could increase the risk of a crash. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V012)

2000 Dodge Ram. Defect: These pickup trucks are equipped with an antilock braking system (ABS) that may have inadequate clearance between the front tire/wheel and the brake hose/ABS sensor wire assembly. During full-lock turns, it is possible for the tire or wheel to contact the brake hose/ABS sensor wire assembly. Continued contact can result in wire damage and/or a hole in the brake line and reduced braking effectiveness. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V038, Daimler Chrysler Recall No. 971).

1994-1999 Dodge Ram. Defect: On those pickups registered or located in states in the salt belt area — Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri — corrosion of the return spring on the hood secondary latch could cause the mechanism to bind in the release position. If the primary latch is not engaged, the hood could open unexpectedly. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V040, Daimler Chrysler Recall No. 973)

2000-2001 Mazda Protege. Defect: On certain passenger vehicles, the left rear brake hoses were damaged during assembly. Brake fluid leakage could occur, degrading braking performance and increasing the risk of a crash. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V024).

2001 Subaru Legacy. Defect: On these passenger vehicles, certain manually adjustable (non-powered) front seat rails have been improperly welded. In the event of a crash, the seat rail could break, injuring the occupant. (NHTSA Recall No. 01V034)

TIRE RECALLS

Bridgestone/Firestone Wilderness LE P265/70R16 Tires. Defect: Certain Wilderness LE tires (both black and raised white letter tires) with Department of Transportation (DOT) numbers V672WL11700 (blackwall) and V672WL21700 (raised white letters) may experience tread separation due to a lack of adhesion to the first steel belt. Tread belt separation may lead to irregular wear, noise or vibration. Continued use of these tires may lead to complete separation of the tread/belt from the tire body, possibly resulting in a crash, personal injury or death. These tires were used as original equipment on 2000 year model GMC Yukon XL 1500 vehicles and were offered as optional equipment on 2000 Chevrolet Suburban 1500 vehicles. (NHTSA Recall No. 01T001).

Bridgestone/Firestone Firehawk GTA-02. Defect: Certain size Firehawk P205/55R16 89H tires produced at the Wilson, N.C., plant, may develop shoulder area cracking with increased mileage. Continued use of a tire with this condition may lead to exposure of the belt edge. Under these circumstances, a belt edge separation is possible, which could result in a loss of tire pressure. These tires were installed as original equipment on certain model year 2000 and 2001 Nissan Altima passenger cars. (NHTSA Recall No. 01T006)

Cooper Motorcycle Tires sizes 130/80R17 65H, 140/80R17 69H, and 150/70R17 69. Defect: These tires may develop radial cracks between tread lugs in the shoulder area. In conditions where there is excessive tire sidewall flexing, this may lead to a separation between components of the shoulder and sidewall, suddenly deflating the tire. Should this happen, a vehicle crash, personal injury or death could be the result. These tires should not be used at highway speeds until they have been inspected and replaced. (NHTSA Recall No. 01T002, Cooper Recall No. 113).

Owners who do not receive a free remedy for these recall defects within a reasonable time should call the following telephone numbers: Daimler Chrysler, 1-800- 853-1403; Toyota, 1-800-331-4331; Bridgestone/Firestone, 1-800-465-1904; Cooper Tire and Rubber Company, 1-800-624-7470; Mazda, 1-800-222-5500; Subaru of America, 1-800-782-2783.



**"Protective Equipment—
it does the body good..."**

Capt. Scott Sims