

KO, on the Slopes

By ADAN Christopher Creek,
VFA-102

The crisp, cool, winter day started out nice enough. My friends and I got up early and caught the MWR bus for a day of snowboarding at Sierra Summit. We were full of anticipation as we discussed our plans. Once the bus had made a quick breakfast stop in Fresno and had gotten back on the road, I dozed off and didn't wake up until we arrived in the parking lot of the ski lodge.

It wasn't long before we were on the slopes having a good time. There were several moguls we easily could jump, and, as the morning wore on, our antics became more daring—until I *accidentally* took my second nap.

When I awoke this time, things just didn't seem right. Everything was out of focus, I couldn't think straight, and my head was throbbing with pain. As I looked around, trying to get my bearings, I could see I was in a room, and a kid was lying in the bed next to mine. Someone also was standing beside me.

As my mind cleared, I realized the person standing beside me was the MWR representative. He asked if I was feeling better. I don't know what my initial response was, but I remember asking questions about what had happened to me. According to him, my buffoonery had caused a bad spill, and I had been in and out of consciousness since the ski patrol had found me seven hours earlier. The MWR representative stayed a little longer to make sure I would be OK and promised to take me home when I was released.

The kid lying in the bed next to mine had his arm in a sling. When he saw me looking at him, he smiled and blurted out, "I remember you!" He, too, had been jumping the moguls and had witnessed the crash that knocked me out. As I had come down the snowboard slopes, I tried what he thought was a backflip. Unfortunately, I rotated too far, and, instead of landing on my feet, I landed on my head and the back of my neck. The kid thought it was the coolest thing he ever had seen, especially when my body went limp after the crash.

The ski patrol reported finding me around noon. They rushed me down the slope and off to the emergency room in an ambulance.

As I look back on this incident, I realize I made a couple of bad decisions. First, I should have been smart enough to wear a helmet. I was lucky I only had a bad concussion. Otherwise, I might not have been able to walk out of the hospital.

My second mistake was trying to combine acrobatics with my jumps, especially when I didn't have the proper safety equipment. My advice to you is, "Leave that behavior to the TV stuntmen."

A cat scan and many X-rays later, I consider myself lucky not to have had any permanent injuries. To be sure I stay that way, I'll wear the right gear and stay within my limits the next time I hit the snowboard slopes. ■