

The Navy and Marine Corps Magazine for Afloat and Shore Safety

SEA &

WINTER 2006-07

SHORE

In this issue:

Focus

on the effects
of alcohol

...plus

- How I Nearly Killed My Wife
- Too **Hot** To Handle
- Recognizing a Stroke

RADM George Mayer, Commander, Naval Safety Center
Col. James F. Jamison, USMC, Deputy Commander
John Mahoney, Head, Communications and Marketing Department

Naval Safety Center (757) 444-3520 (DSN 564)
 Dial the following extensions any time during the greeting.

Sea&Shore Staff

Ken Testorff, Editor/Editor in Chief 7251
 kenneth.testorff@navy.mil

Patricia Eaton, Graphic Artist 7254
 patricia.eaton@navy.mil

Ken Testorff, Distribution 7251
 kenneth.testorff@navy.mil

Points of Contact

Publications FAX (757) 444-6791

Shore Safety Programs Director 7166
 Capt. William Glenn

Explosives & Weapons Safety Division 7164
 LCdr. Al Dean, Head

Traffic & Off-Duty Safety Division 7165
 Charles Roberts, Head

Tactical Operations & Safety Investigation Division 7147
 Jim Wilder, Head

Training Safety Programs Division 7175
 CWO4 David Tomlinson, Head

Shore Safety Programs FAX (757) 444-6044

Shore Safety General E-mail
 safe-shore@navy.mil

Afloat Safety Programs Director 7127
 Cdr. Edward Hogan

Surface Division 7133
 Cdr. David Flick, Head

Diving & Salvage Division 7086
 LCdr. Robert Crouch, Head

Submarine Division 7089
 LCdr. Douglas Chandler, Head

Data Analysis and Media & Education Division 7115
 Steve Scudder, Head

Afloat Mishap Line DSN 564-1562

Afloat Safety General E-mail
 safe-afloat@navy.mil

Installation/Industrial Safety Director 7156
 Nancy McWilliams

Fire Data Analysis Division 7169
 Vince Lisa, Head

Mishaps waste our time and resources. They take our Sailors, Marines and civilian employees away from their units and workplaces and put them in hospitals, wheelchairs and coffins. Mishaps ruin equipment and weapons. They diminish our readiness. This magazine's goal is to help make sure that personnel can devote their time and energy to the mission, and that any losses are due to enemy action, not to our own errors, shortcuts or failure to manage risk. We believe there is only one way to do any task: the way that follows the rules and takes precautions against hazards. Combat is dangerous and demanding enough; the time to learn to do a job right is before combat starts.

Sea&Shore (ISSN 1550-1434) is published quarterly by Commander, Naval Safety Center, and is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense.

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COAST GUARD: Send address changes or requests for more copies to Commandant, USCG, G-KSE, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 2nd St., S.W., Washington, DC 20593.

MARINE CORPS: To be added to *Sea&Shore's* distribution list, increase or decrease number of copies, or take yourself off the list, see your unit publications clerk and have him access MCPDS. *Sea&Shore's* PCN is 74000001900.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Commander, Naval Safety Center
 Attn: *Sea&Shore*, Code 71A
 375 A Street, Norfolk, VA 23511-4399

Send articles and letters to the address above, or e-mail the editor, kenneth.testorff@navy.mil. Visit us on-line at www.safetycenter.navy.mil.

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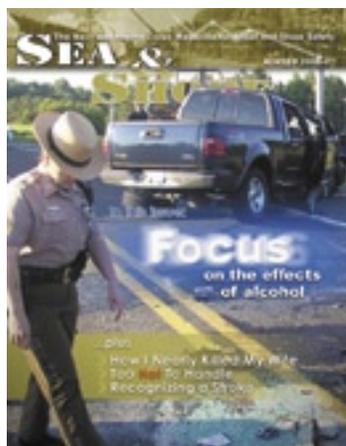
A skier forgets to use ORM when conditions change on the slopes and ends up nursing some broken bones.

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FRONT COVER

Scenes similar to this are a good reason not to drink and drive. If you need more reasons, check out the stories on pgs. 18-19 and 26-29.



Cover graphics by Jeff Hobrath of KR Systems, Inc. (krsystems.com)

From the Editor

Re: “MSF Honors NAS Fallon’s Motorcycle Training,” Summer 2006

The e-mails and phone calls started coming as soon as this issue hit the street. Readers wanted to know why we had used such bad photos with the story on pages 6 and 7. “Look at the discrepancies in eyewear and feet protection!” they rightfully clamored. Please let me assure you I’ll make every effort to watch more closely in the future and include a note of explanation anytime I use a photo with a safety discrepancy. And, by all means, keep the e-mails, letters and phone calls coming. We appreciate your feedback, whether it’s good, bad or indifferent.

Keeping the Workplace Environment Comfortable

When the environment involves extreme temperature conditions (heat stress and wind chill), the ability to predict these conditions can be crucial to mission success. The principal software application for predicting the effects of extreme temperatures for the Navy, Marine Corps and other DoD agencies is the Temperature Utility, or Temp Util. To learn how this software works, see “The Temperature Utility: Environmental Safety for the Warfighter,” an in-depth article by Naval Oceanographic Office scientist Peter J. Washburn. The article is located on our website at <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/media/seashore/vault/articles/0010.htm>.

Editor’s Apology

It has come to my attention that I offended the young Sailor whose uncopyrighted photo I chose to use with the story on pg. 27 in the fall 2006 issue—my apologies to him. Let me go on record as assuring readers everywhere that my actions in producing this magazine never are intended to harm anyone, especially those dedicated people serving our great country and their families. I realize few, if any, readers probably ever take time to read the magazine’s masthead, but I urge you to do so. In case you don’t, let me reiterate a couple of lines here: “Contents are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Navy. Photos and artwork are representative and do not necessarily show the people or equipment discussed.”

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

01 October 2006

The United States Postal Service requires all publications publish a statement of ownership, management and circulation.

Date – 01 October 2006

Title of Publication – Sea&Shore

ISSN – Publication No. – 1550-1434

Frequency of Issue – Quarterly

Publisher – U.S. Navy

Editor – Ken Testorff

Owner – United States Navy

Total No. Copies Printed – 28,941

No. Copies Distributed – 28,616

No. Copies Not Distributed – 325

Total Copies Distributed and

Not Distributed – 28,941

Issue Date for Circulation Data

Above – Fall 2006

Location of Office of Publication

Commander

Naval Safety Center

375 A Street

Norfolk VA 23511-4399

Guest Editorial

The Difference Between

By John Mapp,
Mid-Atlantic Regional Maintenance Center

Let's walk through the aftermath of a mishap. The details don't matter much—any mishap at all will do.

First, the victim will need initial or emergency treatment for injuries. This treatment could be as simple as basic first aid from shipmates or as complex as a massive EMT and fire-department presence in your workcenter.

Question: How much work is getting done while all this activity is going on?

The victim might need to go to medical. Even if she is able to get there under her own power, you've lost that worker for a considerable part of the day, at the very least. If a shipmate has to help the victim to medical, you lose even more time.

Next, your workcenter's safety representative will have to stop his normal job to start investigating the mishap. He will have to interview witnesses, examine and clean up the scene, and act as the liaison with the safety office—all of which takes more time out of the production schedule. Meanwhile, the safety representative and the chief will have to stop their regular work to fill out the mishap reports. Then the LPO, LCPO, division officer, and the department head will have to explain to the CO what happened and why.

Investigations by a safety-investigation board and legal officer also may follow. Each one will involve interviewing witnesses, safety representatives, supervisors, and the victim. Your workcenter-training records will be reviewed, which probably will involve your training petty officer. All these people will be unavailable for their normal jobs during the interviews.

Last, there is post-mishap training. Your entire workcenter will have to stop work and hold training on the mishap—what caused it, what contributed to it, and what they can do to prevent it from happening again.

If you stop and look at all the time lost by now, it becomes readily apparent how much better it is—on every level—just to slow down and do the job *right*, instead of *right now*. The few minutes you lose put-

ting on the proper PPE and following procedures are nothing, compared to the time you may lose if you hurry a task. Somehow, we always have time to do things right—*after* a mishap.

Commander Naval Safety Center, RADM George Mayer, says, "Nothing we do in peacetime is worth somebody's life." Even in the current time of international crises, none of the jobs we do at MARMC are so critical that we—as supervisors and leaders—carelessly should risk the life and health of the men and women under our care.

Instead, we have a *responsibility* to protect everyone under our command, direction or authority. We must protect subordinates from themselves—from the many hazards that beset them in their chosen line of work and, most importantly, from creating a false sense of urgency about the work they do. Subordinates must take responsibility for their actions, too, and pay attention to their own safety.

The work we do here at MARMC is important—we keep a significant portion of the Navy in condition to sail into harm's way. And, while very few tasks *require* us to risk the lives of our Sailors, we do so... on a recurring basis. Just because we may get away with it for a while doesn't make it right, safe, or a good idea. We're playing Russian roulette with the lives of our shipmates every time we let the work schedule encourage risky shortcuts.

The law of averages *always* catches up with you if you keep doing something the wrong way long enough—and it's *always* our fault when it happens. Don't take shortcuts; don't allow your eagerness (or that of your subordinates) to go on liberty override basic precautions.

The maintenance-availability schedule is not worth your life or that of your shipmate. It isn't worth getting anyone hurt, sick, or permanently disabled.

What sort of guidance are we, the leaders and supervisors, providing? Is a good evaluation or fitness report worth more than your shipmates' lives and limbs? More importantly, do the people down on the

“Right” and “Right Now”



Navy photo by PH3 Gary B. Granger

Whether it's administering basic first aid, like these Sailors are learning, or treating more serious injuries, a lot of lost time is involved. The answer is to slow down and do the job “right,” instead of “right now.”

deck plates think your primary motivation is meeting the schedule? If they do, then you're part of the problem.

Get involved in safety. Make it your first priority, and make sure your subordinates know it's your first priority. Keep track of shipmates who have more mishaps than others—they probably require closer supervision. Pay attention to the results of the daily walk-throughs, workplace inspections, and zone inspections. Are you seeing the same or similar hits regularly? If so, you're getting warning signs that the law of averages is catching up with you.

We never must let the death or injury of a shipmate become just another statistic. Don't accept mishaps as “the price of doing business.” Help establish a culture where people pay attention to what they're doing, think about what could go wrong, and decide what can be done to prevent it. Empower them to act on their knowledge and experience, and reward them for the lives they save. Leaders need to be involved in establishing these habits and attitudes—both on and off the job.

The people who work for us are our most important assets. If you don't take care of them, they can't—or won't—take care of you. If you're in a leadership position, your reputation is in their hands. ■

Best Practices

"SEA" Program Tackles a Tough Issue

By Derek Nelson,
Naval Safety Center

The end of deployment signals a glad time for Sailors, a return to families and familiar off-duty pursuits. It also signals a time of increased risk when Sailors get behind the wheel.

A DUI-prevention initiative undertaken by the *Theodore Roosevelt* Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG) documented that the first 48 to 96 hours after return to homeport were the most critical time. What was needed was a better way to identify high-risk personnel and better prepare them for their return. The result was SEA: Sailor Excellence Ashore.

To plan SEA, TRCSG created a strategy cell, including commanders, CMCs, planners, chaplains, psychologists, safety officers, training officers, security officers, NCIS, JAG, financial specialists, and database programmers. Goals included finding an alternative to the traditional "one size fits all" end-of-deployment training and offering focused mentorship, continued training, and other positive experiences during the entire sustainment period of the FRP.

SEA is based on a computerized survey that attempts to identify high-, medium- and low-risk Sailors in a variety of risk areas. Workcenter mentors assist in filling out and checking the assessment to encourage accuracy, and also provide their own independent assessment of which category is the best fit for each Sailor.

As a metric, the strike group uses DUI incidents per 10,000 "Sailor-days," which are days when a TRCSG Sailor is in a position where he or she could experience a DUI (in other words, not underway or on TAD). The baseline metric of previous returning strike groups was 0.58 DUIs per 10,000 Sailor-days. Upon completion of this focused training and returning to home port, the rate was reduced to .29 (through July 14, 2006). Only two Sailors in TRCSG, who were

identified as high-risk in alcohol awareness and who received the specified training and mentorship on the way home from the Med, had DUIs.

The goal is to inculcate the SEA program into daily processes. The database now contains 5,000 to 6,000 personnel. Units continue to assess new Sailors and update the risk category of previously surveyed Sailors because of new incidents or life changes (for example, if they bought motorcycles or got married).

ComCarStrkGru Two requires those who have a DUI to complete a full analysis of the incident once any appropriate NJP is complete, both for the deterrent value and for the benefit of continuing to learn more about ways to enhance the program.

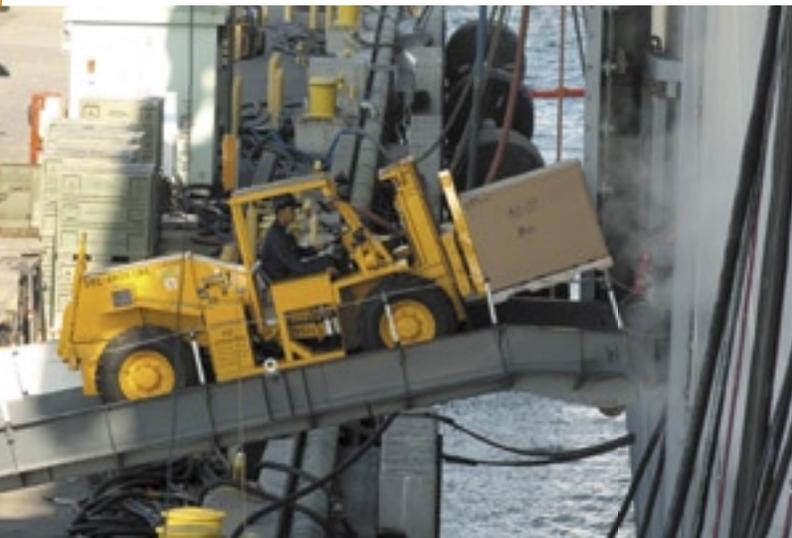
In an April 2006 progress report, ComCarStrkGru Two, RADM James A. Winnefeld, Jr., wrote, "Remember the statistics that gave us our sense of urgency in the first place: a Sailor traffic-fatality rate double the rate of last year, nearly every strike group experiencing a traffic fatality within the first few months of their return from deployment, and a legion of other troubling data." The SEA program, he emphasized, is an important way to "better serve the growth, development, safety, and quality of life of our most important asset." 

RDML Michael Vitale has assumed command of ComCarStrkGru Two.

For more info and background on SEA, visit http://safetycenter.navy.mil/bestpractices/afloat/TRCSG_SEA.htm. To see a list of all the many different categories of best practices on our website, go to: <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/bestpractices/default.htm>.

Navy photo by PH2 Matthew Bash

Off Course and Headed Overboard



Navy photo by JO2 Zack Baddorf

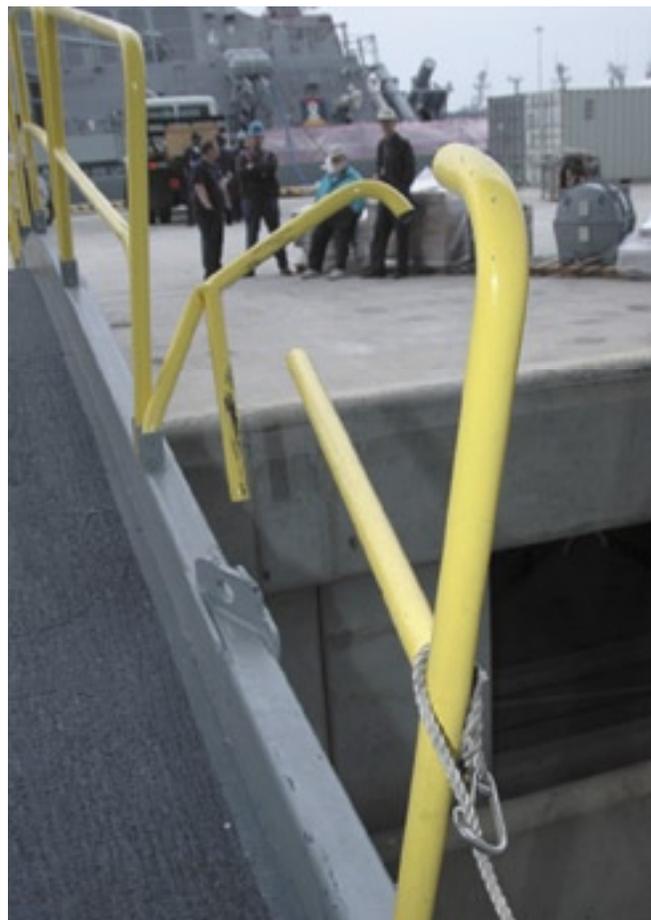
By SK2(SW) Jonathon Igwebueze,
USS *Nassau* (LHA-4)

I had survived a grueling six-month deployment without incurring a single scratch on my body. In the blink of an eye, though, with less than a week back in homeport, I nearly died in a shipboard mishap.

We had a lot of stores needing to come aboard ship from the pier, so I checked out a forklift and drove down to the quarterdeck ramp. I noticed a difference this time. In place of a ramp angling down to the pier, like we normally used, was one with an arch—necessary because we were berthed at a double-deck pier.

I should have used a little ORM on this new ramp and the possible problems involved. Instead, I started down the arched ramp backward, as I always did. With help from the spotters, I was able to maneuver my way toward the crest of the arch. I couldn't see the spotter down at the pier once I reached the arch's crest, however, and subsequently lost situational awareness and veered off course. The forklift's tines went over the ramp's rails [see damage in accompanying photo].

My quick reaction after seeing what was happening saved me from falling over the side with the



forklift, which almost certainly would have killed me.

This incident taught me a vital lesson: No matter what your level of expertise is, you never should take anything for granted. A split-second mistake can turn into irreparable damage. Always carefully examine the environment before starting any activity, then reexamine the setting throughout the course of the event to make sure nothing has changed.

Remain safety conscious at all times, regardless of the pressures that exist. Mishaps can happen to anyone—even the most vigilant people. 🚫

For more info, go to: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/safetips/a-m/forklifts.htm>.

How I Nearly Killed My Wife

By SSgt. Wayne T. Jackson,
HMH-361

“**C**all Life Flight,” the paramedic said, as my heart began to sink. I could not believe what was happening—everything had gone wrong, very wrong, very fast.

It was a beautiful, cool, summer evening in Arkansas—a perfect day to enjoy a ride on my new motorcycle. It took some doing, but I had convinced my wife to accompany me. Once she had swapped the shorts she was wearing for a pair of jeans, we donned our helmets and hit the road.

After only a month of riding an old Kawasaki 750cc, I had realized I was hooked—I had to have a bigger motorcycle, whether I was ready for it or not. A 1500cc Suzuki Cruiser was my bike of choice. After putting a grand total of 92 miles on the new bike, I felt confident enough to handle anything. “I know what I’m doing,” I assured myself as we left that evening.

The ride was awesome: a winding country road with the woman I love and my new bike. This was living! After leaning into a few curves and accelerating, my wife asked, “Do we need to lean over so much and go so fast? It scares me.” We only were going about 40 mph, so I really didn’t give her concerns much consideration. Instead, I reminded myself that I knew what I was doing.

The first sign of trouble came when we decided to return home. Turning this bike around was a lot harder than I had expected. It wobbled a couple of times—to the point I almost lost it—but we eventually got headed in the right direction. After a quick analysis, I again concluded that I knew what I was doing.

On our trip out, we had gone up a small hill—the same one we now were going down. As we approached the crest, I remembered a sharp bend just over the top, but it was too late. I had gunned the engine, which brought us to about 50 mph—no problem for an experienced biker, but I just had realized I really didn’t know what I was doing.

I leaned into the turn and tried to slow down by using my front brakes. Big mistake! The squeal of the rubber trying to hold onto the road is a sound I never will forget. A combination of improper braking and loose gravel on the road caused us to “high-side,” which means we flipped over the top of the bike. Seven hundred pounds of metal now was skidding down the road in our direction. Miraculously, the bike missed us.

The Marine in this story was riding two-up with his wife but not on the make of motorcycle pictured here. *[A subject-matter expert has assured me the operator in this photo is wearing a pair of approved riding boots.—Ed.]*

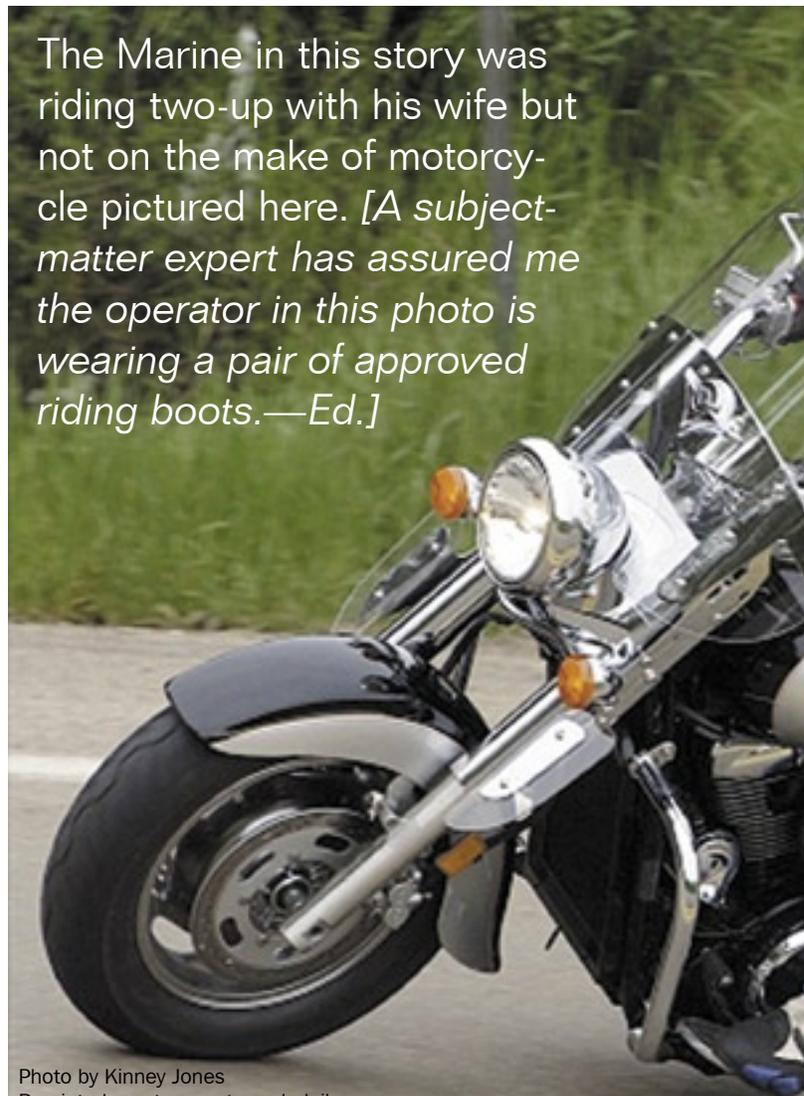


Photo by Kinney Jones
Reprinted courtesy motorcycledaily.com

Sea&Shore

As I slid down the road, I could see my wife tumbling, rolling and finally skidding to a halt. By the time I was able to get up and reach her, she already had begun to cry. She couldn't move her legs, she was disoriented, and she was having trouble breathing. All I cared about was that she was alive. About five minutes passed before a car approached, and the driver called 911.

The next few minutes went fast. The paramedics arrived and quickly determined she needed serious help. I only could watch helplessly as they put her on a back board, secured her head between two blocks, then loaded her into the ambulance and sped toward a waiting Life Flight helicopter. She was taken to a hospital more than 75 miles away. Meanwhile, the highway patrolman, who had responded to the 911 call, took me to a local hospital, where I was treated for mild road rash on my arms and other minor injuries and then released.

When I arrived at the hospital where my wife was, doctors already had determined the extent of

her injuries, starting with six broken ribs, a broken shoulder blade, and broken collarbone—all on her left side. The second digit on her right thumb also was shattered, and her right kneecap was broken in three places. My wife spent the next two weeks in the hospital, undergoing surgery to repair her thumb and knee. Two months of physical therapy followed this treatment.

I escaped with the road rash on both arms, a cracked knuckle on my left ring finger, and the guilt of what my arrogance had caused. Eventually, my wife made a full recovery. However, this story could have ended very differently.

The crash had destroyed her full-face helmet; the visor was scratched so badly you couldn't see through it anymore. The chin guard showed deep scars where she had slid across the ground, and the back of the helmet had a dent the size of a quarter. Without the helmet, she likely would have suffered fatal head injuries.

I have read many stories about motorcycle crashes, and most of them involve the same basic ingredients: a young person, a sport bike, and a lot of speed. I'm not young, I ride a cruiser, and I was operating at the posted speed limit; however, I still found myself in a bad situation.

Many things could have prevented this crash, among them: slowing down, riding according to the road conditions, not carrying a passenger, and more experience. If we had taken the time to put on riding jackets and pants with pads, the injuries would have been less severe. Since the incident, I have purchased a new bike and always wear all my safety gear. I also have taken and passed the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's riding course.

This mishap didn't cost me much money, no citations were issued, and the insurance company paid off the bike. But, I nearly lost the only thing that really matters to me: my wife! ■

For more info, go to: <http://www.jkminc.com/RidingTips.html>.



Maybe Not **9** Lives, But At Least **2**

By AZ2(AW) Raymond Martinez,
VFA-151

It was a day like any other. I awakened to find myself looking out the window at a sun-filled day and thinking about what would happen the next day. I was to take the Navywide examination for PO1 for the first time, and, later the same day, I would leave for cruise on board USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN-72). Tomorrow indeed promised to be a busy day but one that would pale quickly in comparison to something that was going to happen today.

I planned to knock out all my last-minute tasks and make sure there were no loose ends—it would be a day filled with errands. I originally had planned to use my car because I had quite a few things to pick up, but the weather was just too tempting—my motorcycle was my last-minute choice of transportation.

I love motorcycles, and, because I wouldn't see mine for the next six months, I didn't want to miss an opportunity to get in one last ride. I grabbed my backpack, figuring I could carry everything to be picked up in it. Then, I gathered all my riding gear and made sure it was in good condition.

I pulled my bike out of the garage and began my pre-ride inspection. I made sure the tires were in good shape, the chain wasn't too tight or too loose, and the brake-fluid and oil levels were OK—things all riders should do, regardless of experience level. I then started my bike to let it warm up while I put on my riding gear, with the same feeling of anticipation and excitement I get every time before a ride. My father

came out to tell me goodbye before departing and said he would see me later. He just didn't know how much later.

As I pulled out of the driveway, my thoughts were on where I needed to go to accomplish all my tasks. I realized this might not be the best day to ride, since so many things were racing through my head and would distract me from paying full attention to the environment. These reservations all but disappeared, though, when I hit the open road and the rush of riding kicked in. I like to think of myself as a safe rider, but safety only goes as far as the next driver's recklessness.

I hit the freeway and made my way southbound on Highway 99. As it turned out, I completed all my errands with no problems, but then came the trip back home. It was a smooth ride northbound, with a low volume of traffic and the company of a couple other riders I had caught up to while on the freeway. If you ride, you know it's always a plus to meet up with other riders and ride together.

As we rode along, the traffic began to build, so the other riders and I started looking for the reason behind the increase. We soon saw a vehicle had collided with another and had run into a guardrail. Paramedics and local authorities already were on the scene. I could see the traffic was clearing ahead.

As it cleared, I started seeing some openings, but enough congestion still existed that I decided to keep

riding a safe distance behind the driver (of an SUV) I had been following. My only worry was that the driver ahead of me seemed a little too indecisive and unpredictable. The traffic soon began slowing again, and that's when I noticed the driver ahead of me turning her car's blinker on and off, braking erratically, and weaving back and forth, as if she didn't know whether to change lanes. I decided I had to get away from her at the first opportunity.

Looking over my right shoulder, I saw an opening, put on my blinker, and threw my hand out to signal I was changing lanes. I simultaneously started speeding up enough to get around the erratic driver and was beside her when she suddenly changed lanes and

and the paramedics began straightening me out. They thought I had shattered my entire pelvic bone, along with a few other bones. Doctors at the local hospital, however, couldn't find a broken bone in my whole body—just a few abrasions and bruises.

I left the hospital eight hours later with a sprained knee and thumb and minor back-muscle stiffness. People from other departments at the hospital came to see me while I was there because they said it was a miracle I was alive. I couldn't agree more. There's no other way to explain being run over at the waist by an 18-wheeler and still being able to walk and talk and carry on with your duties aboard a Navy aircraft carrier just weeks later.



The victim's windbreaker

collided with me. I was thrown across two lanes of traffic.

I remember seeing first the sky and then the ground, as I tumbled over and over again, until I finally looked up and found myself under an 18-wheeler, with the rear tires heading directly at me. I was powerless to do anything but watch them come closer. What seemed like a couple of minutes but actually was only a matter of seconds passed. At the moment of impact, I did nothing but close my eyes, thinking I surely would be killed. I was certain if I survived the initial impact I would be staring at part of my insides lying beside me. I felt the tires roll over me; then, I was thrown violently at high speed.

The next thing I remember was looking up at the paramedics with my elbow and knee stuck under the curb while they assessed my injuries. I couldn't feel my arms or feet at first, which caused me to fear the worst. Shortly, though, I could feel and move my toes,

At the time of my crash, I was wearing a full-face helmet, a light windbreaker, some jeans, a pair of boots, and leather gloves. This PPE had to have played a huge role in my survival [see accompanying photos]. The entire right and front sides of my helmet were ground down deep into the Styrofoam, and my gloves were completely worn through, along with my pants and jacket. You even could see the tire marks over the midsection of my jacket.

Not a day passes now that I don't think about how lucky I am to be here or what kind of effect my passing would have had on family and friends. Despite what happened, though, I still can't wait to get home and ride my motorcycle again—with new PPE, of course. 🚘

For more info, go to: http://www/motorcyclecruiser.com/streetsurvival/traffic_threats/.

Recognizing a Stroke

According to a widely circulated e-mail, a lady stumbled and fell during a barbecue but quickly assured everyone she was OK, saying she just had tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. She refused an offer to call paramedics.

Others at the barbecue helped the lady clean up and got her a new plate of food. While appearing a bit shaken, she went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening. Her husband called later, though, telling everyone his wife had been taken to a hospital, where she passed away at 6 p.m. She had suffered a stroke at the barbecue. If someone had known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps this lady would have been alive today.

According to many neurologists, the key to saving a stroke victim is being able to quickly recognize the symptoms and start treatment. The effects of a stroke often can be minimized and sometimes totally reversed, particularly when someone recognizes the signs and treatment is started within three hours.

The symptoms of a stroke sometimes are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. A stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize his or her symptoms. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking the suspected victim to do three simple things:

- Smile.
- Raise both arms.
- Coherently repeat a simple sentence, e.g., "It is sunny out today." If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher, noting that you suspect the person is having a stroke.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness,



and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn these three checks. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting.

Widespread use of this test can result in prompt diagnosis and treatment of a stroke, thus preventing brain damage and saving some of the estimated 600,000 Americans who experience strokes each year. Of that number, nearly 160,000 die annually, making strokes the third leading cause of death in the United States. Survivors often are left with lifelong debilitating problems with speech, movement and even thought. ■

Thanks to HMCS Shelton Fisher of the Afloat Safety Programs Directorate for bringing this information to my attention.—Ed.

For more info, go to: <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=52795>, <http://www.amh.org/body.cfm?id=1181>, or <http://www.clevelandseniors.com/health/strokerec.htm>.

Bagging a Buck

Takes More Than Luck

By Ltjg. Cameron Hall,
VAW-117

It's a beautiful fall morning—the air is cool and crisp, with a light frost on the ground. As a hunter enters the woods, his nose is overwhelmed with the smells of his surroundings, so he stops a moment to enjoy the majesty of nature. Then he walks to the ridge, to the spot he picked out months ago, from which he plans to bag the old, 10-point buck that has been eluding him for years.

When the hunter finally reaches his stand, he climbs to the top and starts arranging his gear. Unfortunately, he doesn't see a patch of ice and slips, falling to the ground. He smells the scent of the fall woods but for a moment, then passes out.

Although this account was fictitious, it's reminiscent of what actually happens every deer season around the United States when hunters ignore tree-stand safety.

The golden rule of tree-stand safety is always to wear some sort of harness while in the tree. You can find a wide variety in any hunting catalog. Just be sure to put on the harness as soon as you get in the stand, and keep it on until you quit for the day. Many hunters think you only need safety harnesses with climbing stands, but they're wrong—dead wrong. Regular, ladder tree stands usually are homemade and probably aren't structurally sound. Only one support leg or safety brace has to break before the hunter is thrown down 10 or more feet to the ground.

Another common mistake hunters make is insisting they carry all their gear and weapons up the tree stand at one time—a practice that's unsafe, clumsy and impractical. Instead of lugging everything up in one load, tie it to a rope. When you get to the top of the stand, strap on your harness and pull up your gear

with the rope. This method is better for two reasons: It prevents carrying a heavy load, and it allows the hunter to hoist the weapons [*unloaded, incidentally*] and gear separately.

The most overlooked aspect of tree-stand safety is the stand itself. Despite the variety of commercial products available for reasonable prices, some hunters insist on using a stand that is 15 years old. In many cases, these stands are deteriorated because of being subjected to the elements for so long. Even with using pressure-treated wood, a hunter can't expect a stand to last much longer than five years. I suggest that it's safer and cheaper to buy a commercially-made, metal ladder stand and haul it home at the end of each season.

If you do, you're more likely to find yourself in this scenario: You climb the same 15 steps every Saturday morning, thinking, "This may be the morning I get that elusive 10-point buck." One morning, you get to the top, don your safety harness, and start pulling up your gear when you slip. The harness catches you, though, and, in a few more minutes, you're set for the morning hunt. No sooner do you get situated than the old 10-point buck rambles by, following a doe. You raise your gun, smiling, because you know it's going to be a good day.

Tree-stand safety is no joke. It literally can make or break a hunting trip. Follow these tips and come home smiling. 📌

For more info, go to: <http://hunting.about.com/od/deerbiggame/a/aa120199.htm>, <http://www.deerhunters.net/articles/treestandssafety.htm>, or <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/nrp/education/ts.html>.

Too Hot to Handle

By WO Marc C. Riddle, USMC,
3d MAW

“**D**ude, you won’t believe what happened in port!” is a phrase that usually prefaces an over-exaggerated story of something minor that happened. In this case, though, the story is difficult to overindulge.

We were on cruise aboard USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) and just had pulled into our first port: Split, Croatia. The first strike group to pull into Croatia in six years, we had the pleasure of returning a Medal of Honor to the last known living relatives of a Sailor who died in Pearl Harbor.

Navy photo by PHAN Rob Gaston

Of course, no port call is complete without some quality time experiencing the local festivities and the ever-important admin. As we do in most ports, we set up our admin away from the bustle of the main town. Our choice was Trogir, a neighboring and pleasantly quaint tourist location. The atmosphere was relaxing, the weather nice, and the food great. It was easy to get comfortable in this environment and operate as one normally would in the States.

We decided to enjoy the area nightlife on what would be the last night of our visit. As the final squadronmate was getting ready to take his shower, we failed to tell him that we all had noticed the water temperature was extremely sensitive. Complicating matters was the fact you had to flip a wall switch to start the water heater if you wanted hot water. We had left the wall switch turned on.

About 10 minutes later, the squadronmate came out of the room, holding his shirt away from his chest. He had what looked like severe sunburn. Thinking he probably just had forgotten to apply sunscreen during the day's previous activities, we dismissed his injury at first. Then, he explained he actually had burned his chest in the shower.

He apparently had bumped the shower temperature handle all the way to hot, which caused the water to become scalding. He jumped to the side of the shower to avoid any more exposure, but the boiling water already had done its damage. He had second-degree burns over about a square-foot area [see accompanying photo], and blisters eventually bubbled up. We located some medicine in the local populace to aid in his discomfort, and, upon reporting to ship's medical, he was treated and ordered down from flight ops for medical reasons.

We later learned the water had to have been almost to the boiling point to have caused such



burns. It would have been like taking a pot of boiling water from the stove and dumping it on your chest—not exactly the way to have a “good time” on your last night in port.

Any time you're in a foreign land, be alert to the fact that many things are different. In this case, the building codes (for water temperature)

He jumped to the side of the shower to avoid any more exposure, but the boiling water already had done its damage.

weren't the same as they are in the States. We often take routine and daily activities like showering for granted, especially when we expect normalcy, but an accidental nudge put an aviator out of commission for three days. We learned first-hand that slowing down, taking your time, and assessing your environment will pay off, no matter where you are. ■

For more info, go to: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-burns/FA00022>.

Training: Don't Knock It

By Lt. Dan Martindale,
VAQ-139

In 22 years of naval service, I've done enough training I thought I knew and had seen it all. I didn't realize a wake-up call was in the offing.

We were about three weeks into cruise, participating in "Operation Northern Edge" off the Alaskan coast. As you can imagine, the weather was not the best. We had rain, sleet and more than 40-knot winds. As an added surprise, we had 20 hours of sunlight, which made for long days, especially when we were trying to get night flights done.

As the weather got worse and the crew became tired, we noticed more V4 refueling personnel cutting through the ship to move to their forward fuel stations—a path they didn't usually take. Our maintenance control is located on the 03 level, two frames aft of access to the flight deck.

One night about 2300, we already had been flying for eight hours and were getting ready for the next event. I was standing in front of our maintenance-control counter talking to a chief when I noticed a mob of V4 refueling personnel heading our way. They were running—always a mistake aboard ship. They were ignoring all precautions as they forced their way through the knee-knockers.

As the group passed through the knee-knocker nearest the maintenance-control office, the tallest Sailor jumped through the opening, then stood up straight. He didn't see the fire main directly over his head, the one with its nice, sharp edge where the mounting brackets come together. He hit his head on that edge.

I saw the commotion out the corner of my eye and asked if he was OK. He said he was; then he blurted out a couple of expletives and proceeded down the passageway. The Sailor went only two frames farther, though, before we heard a thump and some shouting from one of his shipmates. I looked over to see the individual who just had hit his head slumped over and

Navy photo by PHAN Graig R. Spiering



First-aid training like this enabled the author to help a shipmate who hit his head on a fire main as he jumped through a knee-knocker.

holding his head. As I rushed to his aid, I realized we had a medical emergency on our hands because blood was running down his head.

He actually had cut a three-to-four-inch gash that would require some stitches. All of my training went into effect as I arrived on the scene. We called away a medical emergency, applied direct pressure to the wound, and wouldn't let the Sailor get up, even though he wanted to continue on to his work.

What's the takeaway here? The next time you cop an attitude about having to sit through another training session, ask yourself if you're prepared to handle an emergency. Your turn—like mine—may come when you least expect it. 📖

For more info, go to: http://dmoz.org/Health/Public_Health_and_Safety/First_Aid/.

Just Call Me “Sparky”

By ET3 Corey Crawford,
USS *Rushmore* (LSD-47)

A shipmate and I were taking advantage of a unique opportunity to turn some refresher training on the high-frequency transmitter system into a successful technical repair. We also were having a change-of-command ceremony that day.

The shipmate and I arrived in the radio-transmitter room shortly before the ceremony was to begin. We turned on the faulty URT-23 transmitter to troubleshoot and waited for it to warm up. Once we saw the fault indications, we decided to check the low-voltage power supply (located in the underside of the URT-23).

We turned off the faulty URT-23 and then extended it on its slide rails, making sure the interlock was engaged. Our next step was to remove all conductive items we were wearing. Finally, we gathered our tools and rotated the URT-23 so we could access the low-voltage power supply.

As I was about to turn on the faulty URT-23 again, I realized the connector from the low-voltage power supply to the rest of the transmitter wasn't seated properly. I rechecked the interlock to make sure it still was engaged, verified the power was off, and gently began removing the improperly seated connector. Suddenly, I felt electricity in both arms and across my chest, signaling that I had touched one of the capacitors on the low-voltage power supply.

I cried out in surprise and quickly yanked my fingers from the connector. With my shipmate's help, I immediately reported to medical to get checked for any further injury.

The new commanding officer was informed of my little misadventure, and it wasn't long thereafter that I met him for a one-on-one conversation. I hadn't made the most promising first impression. Shipmates in my division soon christened me “Sparky”; I couldn't argue with them because I had earned the new nickname.

Has anyone figured out yet what important safety precaution I missed? The correct answer is that I forgot to use a shorting probe to ensure the capacitors had been discharged. Here are all the steps to follow anytime you're deenergizing equipment:

- Secure power (check for multiple power sources).
- Locate a shorting probe and inspect it for damage. Report any damage to your work-center supervisor.
- Connect the shorting probe to a ground not located on the equipment itself (such as a grounding strap).
- Use the shorting probe to discharge any residual electricity that may be contained within the capacitors or other voltage-holding components.
- Return the shorting probe to its designated location.
- Use a multimeter to check for stray voltages.

Once you've followed these steps, it is safe to work on the equipment. ➡

For more info, find a copy of NSTM 300, Chapter 4. You also can find general- and electrical-safety instructions in OpNavInst 5100.19D, Chapters C1 and C9, and D1 and D5.

From Fire Drill

By Ltjg. Patrick O'Reilly,
VP-16

Our squadron just had arrived in Sigonella, Italy, a few days before, and I had the “privilege” of being one of the first duty officers in our new deployed spaces. It was three days after the celebration of our nation’s birthday, and the War Eagles still hadn’t seen one sign of fireworks, but we soon would put on a late-night display that none of us ever will forget.

At 2300, the fire alarm sounded. As is sometimes the norm, many of us in the topside office spaces pondered the validity of the alarm. However, through a window in the duty office, I looked down upon the hangar deck and quickly learned that this was no drill.

A group of Sailors was double-timing out to the flight line. Although this behavior might seem somewhat normal for a fire alarm, I can tell you that the blast of water shooting across the hangar bay confirmed that it would not be a quiet night of duty. The actuated AFFF system below resembled a collapsing water dam, as it rapidly covered everything in sight with a sea of white foam (*see accompanying photos*).

During post-incident interviews, we learned that the talented group of VP-16 maintainers had had quite an interesting night, as well. Because it was the night before the first formal zone inspection, night checkers were busy cleaning and organizing their spaces. No stone was being left unturned—even the painted bulkheads were getting a fresh scrubbing. One industrious airman from the line shack was washing the bulkhead adjacent to an AFFF manual-release handle when he inadvertently knocked the handle and actuated the AFFF system.

The airman immediately told his senior chief what had occurred. The senior chief’s focus now shifted to finding a way to secure the AFFF, instead of worrying about a fire. He and a PO2 quickly found and secured the system’s supply valves, but the damage already had been done. Three feet of foam now blanketed the deck. More than 100 Sailors spent the next few hours cleaning up the mess.

According to a manufacturer, AFFF is a specifically formulated, synthetic, aqueous-film-forming-



to Foam Party



foam concentrate. It smothers fires, thus preventing air from reaching the flammable materials and lowering the heat of combustion by its cooling action. Another positive effect—though not advertised by any manufacturer—is that AFFF will give you the cleanest hangar around. On the following day's inspection, the skipper didn't find a single hit.



While AFFF prevents fire from spreading, it can be corrosive if you don't immediately rinse exposed aircraft and equipment with fresh water. Luckily, no aircraft were in our hangar that evening. Although the events of that evening were strange, many, including me, found the most improbable part of the night to be an empty P-3 maintenance hangar.

Sailors in today's Navy frequently alter their operating environments. In the final analysis, learning about the ever-changing work environment should be a top priority for every squadron. My duty-office staff was unsure of the proper phone numbers for the base fire department—we later learned the numbers were 114 or 911.

We also learned that all squadron personnel should be more familiar with the AFFF system. The fire department briefed us the following morning.

Finally, all fire equipment needs to be labeled properly. Personnel from the safety office put up placards after our incident.

The squadron duty office, our safety office, and the maintenance team all learned valuable lessons—the biggest one being to know your surroundings. With the help of all hands, we hopefully can keep the “foam parties” to a minimum. ■

For more info, go to: <http://www.dcfp.navy.mil/library/dnews.htm>.

The Night I Met “the Other Driver”

By Lt. Mark Hughes,
VQ-7

We’ve heard it before—“It’s the other driver you have to worry about.” One night in Texas a few years ago, that warning took on special meaning.

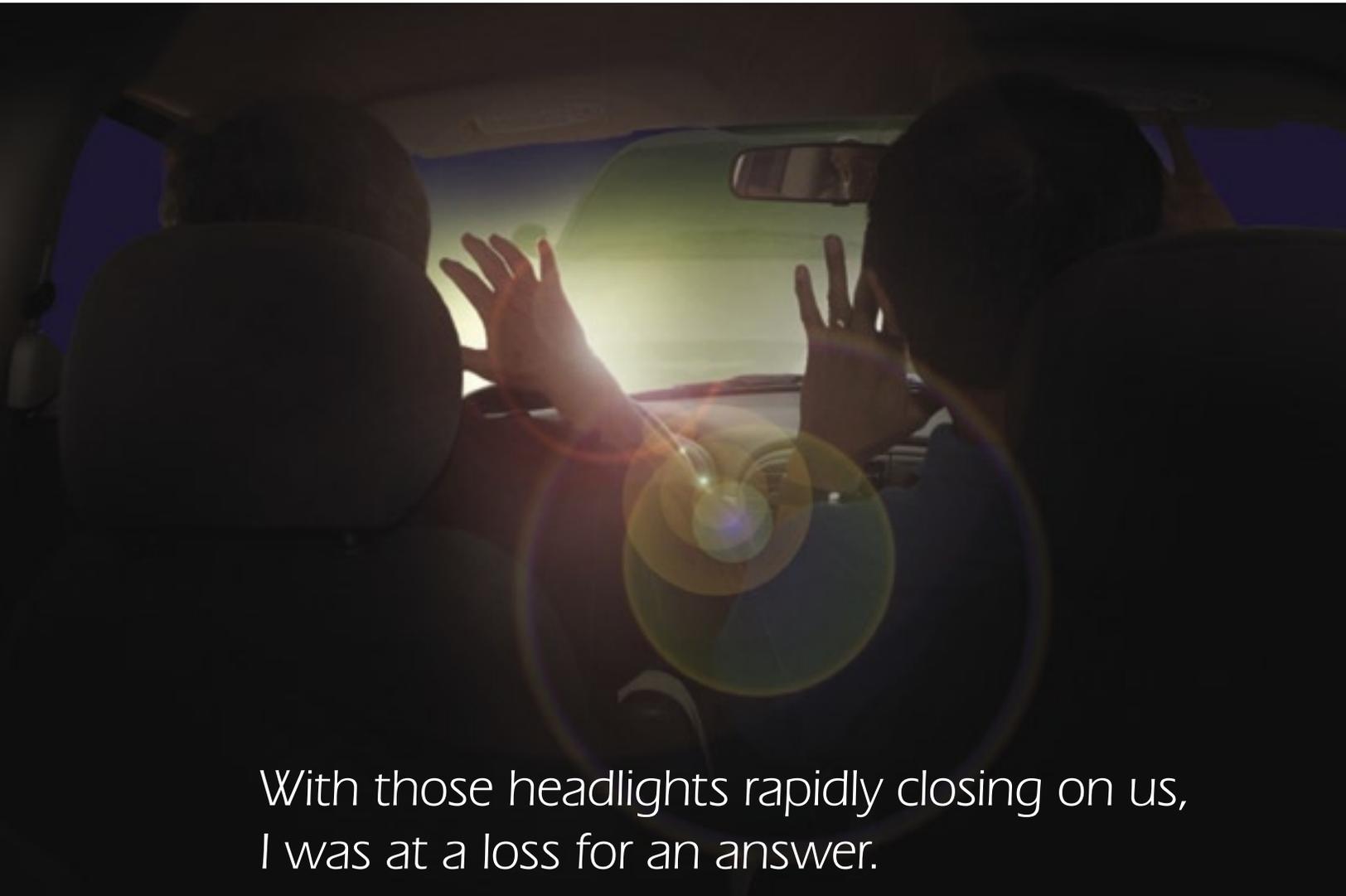
I was visiting with my family for the holidays. On my last night home, I decided to go into town and shoot some pool with my cousin, Alex. We played for about two hours, then left to grab a bite to eat before calling it a night. I was tired and had to get up early the next day, so I wasn’t in the mood to drink and stay out late.

Five minutes from my house and the nearby Taco Cabana, where we had decided to eat, we were talking when I suddenly noticed an odd sight in the distance. Headlights were approaching—on our side of the road! For the next few seconds, which seemed like an eternity, I was in shock. After all, I never had been in a situation like this.

What the heck was I supposed to do? With those headlights rapidly closing on us, I was at a loss for an answer.

Finally, I started honking my horn and flashing my headlights—a strategy I maintained for only a few seconds. When I looked up again, the headlights were just yards in front of me. I realized I had no choice but to leave the road. I yelled at Alex to hold on, then turned the steering wheel of my old Chevy Cavalier hard right. The car veered quickly but not soon enough. After hollering a few expletives, I closed my eyes, braced my body, and hoped for the best. Our vehicles collided head-on, driver-to-driver.

For moments right after the crash, it seemed like I was in a dream state—everything went black. Then, I woke up and realized I still was alive. I looked around to find blood everywhere, so



With those headlights rapidly closing on us,
I was at a loss for an answer.

Photo by Fred Klinkenberger. Composite.

I knew one or both of us was hurt. I soon figured out the seat belts in my old Chevy hadn't lived up to their full potential. They had kept me inside the car, but they were loose enough to let me fly forward, and my face had hit the windshield.

I looked over at Alex and asked him how he was. He said he couldn't move and was having trouble breathing. Fearing the worst, I tried to get out of my car. Unfortunately, the roof and door on my side had crushed downward and inward, forcing me to look for an alternate means of escape. I unbuckled my seat belt and crawled out the backpassenger door. Seconds later, Alex also managed to climb out of the car. He was fine, except for being in shock and having the wind knocked out of him.

Within minutes, we found ourselves in a sea of onlookers, police, emergency-medical personnel, and a news crew.

To make a long story short, my cousin and I were very lucky. He suffered a strained back and

neck and two broken ribs. I had cuts on my head, a strained back and neck, and lots of bumps and bruises. The other driver didn't have a scratch, but the police arrested him for DWI. His BAC was 0.20, more than twice the legal limit in Texas. At the time of his arrest, he couldn't walk a straight line, and he still had no idea he had caused an accident.

Even though you may choose not to drink and drive or to have a designated driver doesn't mean you'll get home safely. You still have to worry about that other driver—the drunk who gets behind the wheel and tries to drive home on your side of the road. Incidentally, the other driver in this case pleaded guilty to DWI. 🚓

The author was assigned to VQ-3 when he wrote this article.

For more info, go to: <http://www.roadtripamerica.com/DefensiveDriving/Rule 31.htm>.

SUPERDRUNK

Able To Fall Off Tall Buildings

By OS2 Gregory R. Bowman,
USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC-20)

Coming home from long or unexpected under-way periods often can lead to excessive revelry as Sailors try to make up for lost time by cramming a lot of partying into one night. The result can be liberty incidents and injuries.

My ship was returning to its homeport of Gaeta, Italy, from three weeks off the coast of western Africa. We had had fewer than 24 hours to prepare for this cruise, which came in the middle of a holiday leave period. Before leaving, a friend had planned a joint birthday party for her husband and me. Guests had been notified, and the menu had been set when the order came, sending us “haze grey and underway.” With the birthday party canceled, many of us now were anxious to get off the ship and into the bars.

The night began innocently enough—dinner at a local restaurant and everybody meeting at a bar for a few drinks. The few drinks quickly turned into many, though, and the evening soon spun out of control. By the end of the night, I had ingested a huge amount of alcohol before leaving the bar about 2:30 a.m. to return to my apartment alone.

I made it back to my apartment OK but couldn't remember how I got there. When I opened the door, my attention immediately was drawn to the floor in the main hallway of the apartment. It was covered with white plaster dust and water that appeared to have leaked from the building's roof, which was being replaced. Besides being very drunk, I became very angry and stormed out of my apartment and up the stairs to the roof.

I stepped onto the rooftop, which was covered by tarps weighted down with bricks and slabs of concrete. Obviously, it was a little dark up there at 3

o'clock in the morning. What I hoped to discover is anyone's guess, but I was drunkenly determined to do something about the mess in my apartment. While walking around the perimeter of the roof, I tripped on one of the weights and fell to my knees. I subsequently lost my grip on the keys to my apartment and only could watch as they went flying off the side of the building. The keys landed behind a white metal fence that surrounded most of the building on the ground level.

Without those keys, I couldn't get back in my apartment. I should have gone back inside the building, walked back down the stairs or taken the elevator to the garage, hopped the 4.5-foot fence, and retrieved my keys. But I suddenly had a better idea.

The construction workers had erected scaffolding up one side of the building for transporting things up to the roof. The scaffolding happened to straddle the fence and conveniently was located on the side where I had dropped my keys. I figured, “What the heck? Since I'm up here, I might as well just monkey down the side of the building and grab my keys.”

I probably should mention here that my building has four floors and stands about 50 feet high. Shortly after passing the fourth-floor balcony of my living room, I lost my grip on the outside rails of the scaffolding and plummeted toward the ground. En route, I hit the left side of my torso hard on the edge of wooden planking. I came to an abrupt halt—not lying flat on the ground but standing straight up, or what at first seemed like standing straight up.

I quickly realized, though, that I couldn't move anywhere because my feet weren't touching the ground. I could hear the seat of my jeans tear whenever

I tried to move, so I reached behind me to see what was wrong. The six-inch metal pole extending from the top crosspiece of the fence had caught my pants and was keeping me from touching the ground.

I was upset at first because I was wearing my favorite pair of jeans, and they appeared to be ruined. I soon forgot that problem, though, when my continuing investigation revealed the upper part of my thigh was sticky with what felt like blood. It turned out that the pole not only had caught my jeans, it had impaled my left butt cheek. It entered the underside of the cheek and tore through the top. As I tried to lift

and forfeiture of a half-month's pay, along with much well-deserved ribbing by my shipmates and friends.

I came away from this incident with several lessons learned. The most obvious, of course, is not to overindulge or abuse alcohol. Even in a sober state, I should not have been on that roof at night, if at all. I should have waited until the next day and called the landlord about the mess in my apartment. Having gone to the roof and dropped my keys, I should have called the local NSA security who could have gotten me in my apartment or given me a ride back to my ship. And, I definitely should not have been climbing



myself off the fence, I started losing consciousness. My memory then became a mix of pain, Italian police, ambulances, and hospitals.

The next morning, I awoke with stitches in two places on my rear, some broken ribs, and other assorted bruises, bumps and abrasions. I spent the next two weeks in Naples, TAD to the naval hospital in Gricignano, and missed an underway period. I visited a doctor daily and was poked, prodded and continuously reminded of how lucky I had been. I easily could have landed headfirst on that fence or impaled a vital organ, instead of my butt. I also paid for my irresponsible actions with 30 days' restriction

around on that rickety, Italian scaffolding 40 or 50 feet in the air, no matter what the reason.

More than four months have passed since my incident, and I still have aches and pains, but I'll gladly live with them, given what could have happened to me. ■

For more info, go to: http://resources.prev.org/recentfindings_sod_patct.html, <http://www.greenfacts.org/alcohol/1-2/04-health-effects-alcohol.htm>, or <http://alcoholstudies.rutgers.edu/onlinefacts/medconseq.html>.

Falling-Down Drunk— For What?



By Ken Testorff,
Naval Safety Center

The answer to that headline question for one Sailor was a lengthy hospital stay. At last check, the 21-year-old E-1 had been hospitalized 28 days for his one-night toot. It all started when the Sailor's ship returned from a four-day underway period.

Between 1500 and 1800, he consumed two mixed drinks and a double mixed drink before accompanying a buddy to the base bowling alley, where they

devoured a pizza. The two left there about 1900 and went to the base mini-mart, where they bought a liter of hard liquor, then proceeded to the BEQ lounge to watch TV and drink the booze with soda.

By 2000, the liquor bottle was about half empty, and the buddy had had enough, so he returned to the ship. Another shipmate was driving by the BEQ entrance an hour later when he saw the E-1 stagger to the lawn and fall on his face. The shipmate immediately summoned the ship's duty MAA, who was making rounds at the barracks. Together, they helped the E-1 up, but he couldn't stand on his own.

The duty MAA called for an ambulance, which took the E-1 to a local Army hospital. In transit, he vomited and inhaled his own vomit, which severely damaged his lungs. Doctors at the hospital treated and admitted him to ICU. His BAC at that time was 0.240.

What caused this problem? No one knows for sure. The E-1 wasn't known as a frequent consumer of alcohol, and there were no previous signs of alcohol abuse. He had attended the command-indoctrination lecture on alcohol abuse but hadn't yet been to a PREVENT class because of the ship's operational schedule and the fact he had been on board less than four months. *[Personal responsibility and values education training, or PREVENT, is the Navy's alcohol-and-drug-prevention class for Sailors 18 to 26 years old. The goal of the three-day program is to provide Sailors with the necessary education and training to be viable, personally responsible, contributing members of the Navy. PREVENT is one element of the Navy's Right Spirit campaign, designed to deglamorize the use of alcohol.]* The mandatory buddy plan wasn't required for home-port liberty.

As the CO said, "We were lucky not to lose a Sailor, and we'll use this incident as a further wake-up call to the effects of alcohol abuse." Besides those efforts already mentioned, the ship always includes alcohol as a topic during safety stand-downs and one-on-one, division-officer counseling about liberty plans. ■

For more info, go to: <http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/factsAboutAlcoholPoisoning.aspx> or <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/PEOPLE/outreach/SafeSobr/15qp/web/idalc.html>.

Booze—It Ain't Macho, Cool or Funny

By Ken Testorff,
Naval Safety Center

If the preceding incident were an isolated case, Navy and Marine Corps brass wouldn't be working so hard to get a handle on drinking problems. Here are a couple more reasons why the situation can't be ignored:

An alcohol-impaired, 28-year-old E-5 arrived at a barracks one October night and was visiting with two shipmates when they all decided to go outside onto a third-floor balcony to smoke. The shipmates repeatedly had to stop the E-5 from jumping over the handrail.

Finally, one shipmate went inside, and the other turned his back to light a cigarette. The E-5 seized that opportunity to leap over the handrail. He plunged 20 feet, breaking both heels and four vertebrae in his lower back. Besides spending 21 days in a hospital and losing 28 workdays, the victim learned he will be permanently partly disabled. His BAC at the time of the mishap was 0.249.

This incident occurred about three weeks before the E-5 was scheduled to visit a Family Services Center for an alcohol-dependency evaluation. That appointment was the earliest one available. Seven months earlier, the E-5 had had a DUI, and he had delayed the evaluation and possible treatment in favor of going on deployment. In the interim, he signed a page-13 entry, stating he would not consume alcohol while deployed—a promise that he kept.

Elsewhere, one evening in December, a Mississippi sheriff's office received several 911 emergency calls from interstate motorists about a reckless driver [turned out to be a Navy O-2] who had been speeding down the highway when she crashed. Deputies arrived at the scene to find the O-2's car totaled after side-swiping an SUV (still drivable) and another car (also totaled).

Upon arriving at the O-2's car, the one deputy was "overwhelmed" by the smell of alcohol. He said she



Navy photo by JO3 Adam R. Cole

A drug and alcohol prevention advisor (DAPA) aboard USS *Juneau* (LPD-10) leads a special focus group with second class petty officers as part of the ship's Right Spirit campaign.

also was exhibiting erratic behavior—not surprising, when you consider her preliminary BAC level (taken at a local hospital) was 0.286.

The deputy tried to continue interviewing the O-2 at the hospital but reported she was incoherent. She couldn't even provide basic information (e.g., name, address and phone number). She still was exhibiting behavior of a "severely intoxicated" person later in the evening when the deputy finally released her into the custody of her husband.

As it turns out, this incident wasn't the O-2's first one involving alcohol. She had attended the level-3

During Red Ribbon Week (Oct. 23-29, 2004), at MCAS Miramar, various organizations like the Substance Abuse Control Center promoted messages to get Marines and Sailors to stomp out drug and alcohol abuse in their own lives.

substance abuse and rehabilitation program (SARP) a little earlier, following a series of alcohol-related problems.

The Navy and Marine Corps are filled with “bulletproof” young men and women, who have competitive natures that drive them to succeed and, in some cases, exceed. Unfortunately, the same competitive nature sometimes leads to risk-taking, and, for some Sailors and Marines, those risks may include excessive alcohol consumption.

“At some point, alcohol abuse is going to show its effect on the body,” said the Marine Corps non-commissioned OinC at a naval hospital’s substance-abuse council center. “Alcohol is toxic to the human body, so, in any amount, it’s poison.”

Sometimes, the results of binge drinking (having five or more drinks at one time) can be even more serious. As explained by the drug-demand reduction coordinator at the same naval hospital, “Alcohol is a drug, and, when you’re drunk, it’s a drug overdose. Most people never think about it that way, but they can die from alcohol poisoning. If you’re playing drinking games and pounding 14 or 15 drinks a night, you can die.”

For example, an E-8 was drinking rum and coke with beer while playing cards at his residence. Suddenly, he collapsed and fell off a chair onto the floor. Thinking he just had passed out from the booze, his wife let him lie on the floor for a half-hour before she called 911. Emergency-medical technicians and police responded. Resuscitation efforts continued all the way to a local hospital, where doctors pronounced the E-8 dead from alcohol poisoning. His BAC was 0.234.

Another alcohol fatality was a young Marine E-2. In fewer than five hours, the E-2 drank 16 12-ounce beers, 32 ounces of Japanese sake, seven shots of 80-proof brandy-and-coke mix, and 200 milliliters of 80-proof tequila. His BAC was 0.57.

Alcohol poisoning or overdose is a serious topic that touches the civilian sector, as well as the military.



Marine Corps photo by LCpl. Skye Jones

Symptoms include mental confusion; vomiting while sleeping; seizures; slow or irregular breathing; and a cold, clammy, pale, bluish-colored skin. Victims often cannot be aroused.

If you suspect alcohol poisoning, don’t waste time. Call 911 immediately. Stay with the victims and turn them on their side to prevent choking on vomit. Quick action on your part can save lives. Sleeping it off, taking a cold shower, or drinking coffee will not reverse the effects of alcohol; time is the only thing that can sober a drunk.

Commands must take an aggressive stance on alcohol abuse and educate Sailors and Marines on the negative effects of drinking too much. It also is essential to stress that Sailors and Marines call for medical attention. Potential embarrassment is hardly a concern when the choice is sending a friend on a simple trip to an emergency room or to the morgue. Take your pick, and choose wisely; it’s a decision you’ll have to live with the rest of your life.

If you drink, don’t exceed your limits. Moderation is key. Take it slow—no more than one drink per hour. Don’t drink on an empty stomach, use the buddy system, and leave driving to the designated driver. Never leave friends alone to “sleep it off” if you suspect they’ve had too much to drink; they may not wake up. Drinking to the point where you pass out, choke on your own vomit, or fall from a balcony is not macho, cool or funny. ■

For more info, go to: <http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/OtherAlcoholInformation/factsAboutAlcoholPoisoning.aspx> or <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/PEOPLE/outreach/SafeSobr/15qp/web/idalc.html>.

Even a Little Alcohol Increases Risk of Injury

By Matt McGowan,
University of Missouri-Columbia
News Bureau

Alcohol's burden on society is undisputed. The economic impact alone is staggering. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, billions of dollars in earnings are lost each year due to alcoholism and alcohol-related incidents. Billions more are spent on medical costs and public services.

Despite all this information about the societal problems caused by alcohol, few studies have shown the impact of short-term exposure to the prevalent drug. New findings by a University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) researcher demonstrate that a person's risk of injury increases significantly after only two standard drinks, such as two 12-ounce beers. According to Dan Vinson, family-practice physician and professor of family and community medicine at MU, "This study shows that just two drinks during a six-hour period more than double the chances that a person will sustain some type of injury."

Vinson's research destroys popular myths about how much alcohol people safely can consume in a given time period. For example, three or four drinks consumed over a six-hour period—a quantity generally accepted as safe if the drinks are distributed at one or less per hour—multiplies the risk of injury by five. Five or six drinks in the same time period increase the risk of injury tenfold. Overall, the study provides strong evidence that short-term, acute exposure to alcohol poses a serious threat of injury.

"We're not talking about alcoholism in this study," said Vinson. "We're talking about common, ordinary behavior."

As predicted before and during the study, Vinson believes the findings provide important

data that could influence public policy. The study indicates that the typical person is impaired substantially before reaching a blood-alcohol content of 0.08, the current level for being considered drunk in Missouri [and most other states]. To illustrate this point, a 160-pound man who consumes four drinks in one hour would have a BAC of 0.08 at the end of that hour. A 135-pound woman who consumes three drinks in one hour also would have a BAC of 0.08 at the end of that hour.

The study used the case-crossover method, a relatively new study design developed by Malcolm Maclure, one of the co-investigators. The researchers compared patients' drinking consumption in the six hours before their injury with their drinking consumption in the same six-hour block of time the previous day. The researchers obtained their data from interviews with individuals who were treated for injuries in one of the three emergency rooms in Columbia, Mo. Researchers also compared the subjects to a community-control group and discovered very similar findings.

Vinson hopes his study will spark a public discussion about the implications of low to moderate levels of alcohol consumption. He says the information should help family-practice physicians answer the common question of how much alcohol can be consumed without endangering one's health. Vinson's study was published in the May 2003 issue of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*. ■

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For more info, go to: <http://www.jrussellshealth.com/alceffct.html>.

Drinkin' in the Name of Science

By Pat Hahn

When Karen Kadar of Comprehensive Safety Systems (CSS) asked me if I wanted to participate in a drinking-and-riding experiment last fall, I immediately volunteered. Free drinks on the government's tab? Count me in!

Comprehensive Safety Systems was awarded a grant by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to study impaired riding in Minnesota. Alcohol is a huge factor in motorcycle fatalities, and Minnesota has one of the highest rates in the country. Among other activities, such as a new motorcycle-curriculum package for driver-ed classes and two "saturation" patrols in June 2001, CSS staged an impaired-riding event to showcase the effects of alcohol on riding skills.

There were five of us who volunteered: Dirk, Sue, Greg, Michele, and I. We arrived by limousines around 11 in the morning—well, not limousines, exactly—more like passenger vehicles driven by limo drivers. Well, not limo drivers, exactly—just friends who, for some reason, volunteered a day off to haul our drunk butts home. Anyway, we arrived before breakfast, which is to say we were forbidden from eating anything until after the experiment.

We met at the Highway Safety Center in St. Cloud, Minn. That's the same place where law enforcement can learn cool stuff like pursuit techniques and how to ram other vehicles. They also have a testing pad for motorcycle riders, identical to the ones used by the state for skill tests. In addition to CSS staff, we were treated to the undivided attention of the Minnesota State Patrol's "Trooper Doug" and Gordy Pehrson, a senior license examiner for Driver and Vehicle Services. Doug's job was to administer the breathalyzers; Gordy's was to score the tests. A film crew from SAGA Marketing was there, as were two members of Minnesota Dial-A-Ride.

We took the state's motorcycle test three times: once sober, once at 0.04 percent BAC, and once more at 0.09 percent. The test consists of a sharp left turn, a controlled stop, a cone weave, a U-turn, a quick stop, and a swerve. While the applicability of these particular maneuvers to the street is debatable, the skills needed to perform them demonstrate overall control, balance, confidence, skill, reflexes, and knowledge. On the sober round, we all performed passingly. I believe we each made a couple of minor mistakes but not enough to fail the test.

For weeks before the event, I was very nervous, grinding my teeth and wringing my hands. I didn't know how the booze would affect me. I didn't know if I could make the bike do those things after I'd tipped a few. I didn't know if I even could stay upright. Being deathly afraid of pain compounded the flashes of anxiety I was having about my wedding the following week. I knew how PO'd my fiance would be if I showed up for wedding pictures with each arm in a big white cast. I was filled with dread at the possibilities. I almost turned in my breathalyzer straw and let the others do the dirty work. Sadly, while my brain was busy trying to find a way out of my predicament, my feet already were taking me toward my destiny—funny how that works.

After our first test, we were ushered into the "laboratory": a big semi-trailer. Inside were 24 of those driving simulators, complete with steering wheels, speedometers, pedals, shift levers, and tiny windshields. We each slid into a cockpit that suspiciously resembled the dashboard of a late 60s Impala—don't ask me how I know—and accepted a complimentary beverage.

Carla the Bartender doled out vodka and sodas (known as "loudmouth cocktails") shortly thereafter, for Dirkie and me; canned beer, a.k.a. "brown whizz-

ers,” for Greg and Michele; and white zinfandel for Sue. Our immediate goal was to pound three drinks in an hour and then retake the test, so we got down to business.

Phase one was astounding. I’m sure you can imagine. The dumbest things became howlingly funny. We turned up the volume—way up. Halfway through my first drink, I already was thinking about the second. “I’d like two limes in the next one, please.” By the second drink, Sue and Michele started getting all flirty. So did Greg, now that I think about it. You could count the number of drinks they’d each consumed by counting the number of times they touched you or squeezed part of your body during any

60-second time period. They each eventually downed seven—yikes! Dirkie target-fixated on a wallet photo of someone’s 20-year-old daughter, hinting loudly that he still would be eligible until March. Michele and I somehow managed to fit two people in my simulator—too bad I forgot my make-out tape.

I’ve seen those blood-alcohol cards where you can measure your BAC by figuring your weight and number of drinks, but I was astonished at the way my body reacted to three highballs on an empty stomach. I bounced around the trailer steps and out into the sun and cheerfully blew a 0.04—less than half the legal limit—already feeling W-a-a-a-y past the point that I would attempt to operate a motor vehicle.



Trooper Doug asked me if I'd ever ridden a bike drunk before. I sheepishly told him no. I'd been that drunk before, to be sure, but not while driving—I always had assumed I was over the limit. I always must have played it safer than I'd thought. I never would have guessed, but, even at 0.04, I was narrow—you know? Tight. I never knew what that meant until then: Your attention comes to an abrupt halt about 20 feet in front of you. Your hearing narrows, your vision narrows—tight. I began to entertain the thought that the legal limit is disturbingly high.

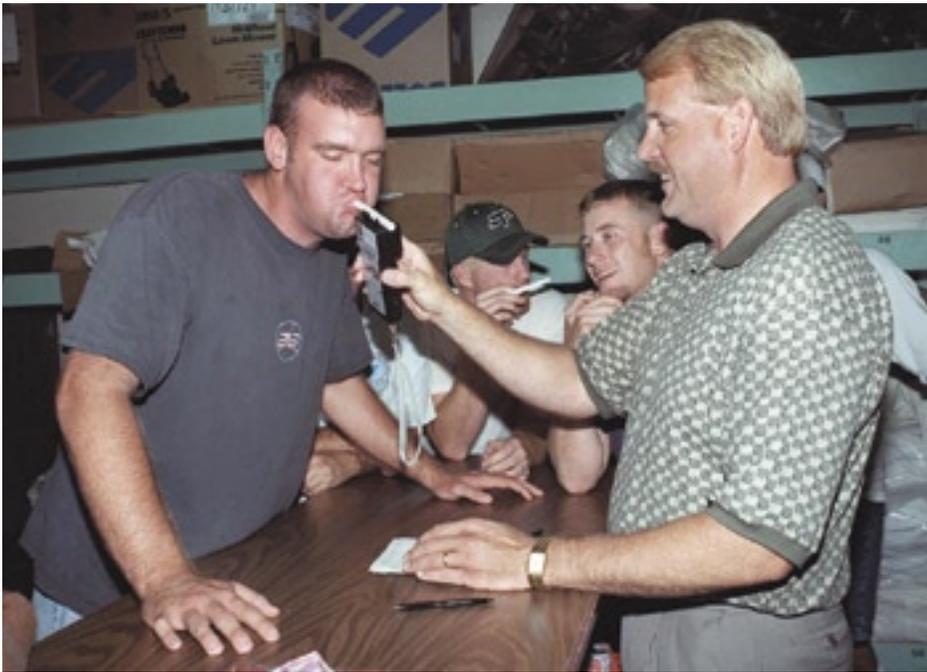
So when round two of the test came, I was liquid with confidence. My cup spilled over. I felt strong...powerful...smooth. I was gonna ace this test. I had forgotten all about wedding pictures. I had forgotten all about personal injury. I had forgotten where my car keys were. I didn't care; I was a motorcycle god. I could do this baby in my sleep. There was nothing I wanted more than to be on that bike. I threw on my gear and performed flawlessly on the scored test.

Well, not flawless, exactly. The directions seemed a little unclear. Lining up the bike on the little white "T" was particularly troublesome. I almost dropped the bike when I set my right foot down hard on a

small patch of sand. My clutch control was dubious, but I managed the cone weave without actually hurting anyone, though the SAGA guys with the big, expensive camera looked alarmed for a few seconds. I performed the test perfectly—no points off—but how embarrassing! Fortunately, no one saw the mistakes I made. Nobody was watching that close, right? Well, I mean, except for the eight or 10 people standing there smiling at me. I didn't stick around to watch how the others did because I lost interest and headed back to the bar.

Four more drinks and an hour later, I again was out in the sun, this time lit up like a scoreboard, pinching butts, and ready to "...get this show on the road." I blew a 0.09 for Trooper Doug, who, for some reason, seemed terribly amused. I gave him a quick salute, threw a leg over, and proceeded to ace another one—every maneuver perfect...every stop, every start smooth...no cones, no lines, no trouble. Well, I had a little trouble with the "T" again, and I guess I had a little trouble with the cone weave. Somehow, it felt like my clutch and throttle hands no longer were connected to my arms, but that was OK, because instinct took over—I think. And I did cut that one turn a little





Air Force photo by MSgt. Sam Shore, USAF

Participants in an Air Force base standard field-sobriety-testing course blow into a portable breath tester to measure blood-alcohol content. Monitoring the test is a member of the local police department.

close, but I still made it. “Sorry to wreck the experiment, Karen. I won’t tell anybody if you don’t.” I was very pleased with myself.

That is, until I saw the score sheet. Not only had I gone over on the braking, amateurishly skidding the rear tire, I completely had blown the sharp turn, running over the boundary on the inside with both tires. The scary thing was I hadn’t realized either mistake—and I knew this test, inside and out. I help train license examiners every spring. In the real world, it would have sounded more like this, “One minute, I was just riding along, and the next minute, I woke up in this hospital room.”

Gordy and Trooper Doug were grinning at me and asking me how I felt. “Great and thirsty. I passed, didn’t I?” Doug told me that if he had seen me out in public somewhere, he would have stopped me. My weight had been shifting from side to side while Gordy had read the instructions; my awareness of things around me was gone, and I dismounted before putting the kickstand down, almost dropping the thing. I told Trooper Doug, “But I’m only at a point oh-nine,” to which he taunted me with, “Wanna blow another one, hotshot?” I tactfully declined. I don’t know if that same refusal would have gone over so well on the side of the road.

Again, I didn’t pay much attention to the rest of the show, but I learned they all did pretty much the same thing. Dirkie almost dropped the bike, too. Sue didn’t even want to get on it. Michele failed her final

test so miserably they stopped her halfway through. I believe she threw up shortly thereafter.

The consensus was that we all thought we rode better than we actually did. The little stuff gave us a lot of trouble, and the big mistakes we made were ones that could have been pretty dramatic in the real world. Fortunately, no one got hurt, and we were all sort of relieved when it was over. Back in the trailer, Carla flatly refused to serve me any more drinks and, instead, force-fed me a sandwich.

I’ve never had to make a decision about whether to drink and ride, so I didn’t learn anything that will change my behavior. But what I learned about BAC—how bombed I was, even when I was well below the legal limit—was a real wake-up call. I know that a person can be arrested at less than 0.10 percent, but I never realized just how badly two or three drinks can jam up your senses. It bothers me a little to know that a person could have seven cocktails in two-and-a-half hours and still be “legal.” Actually, it bothers me a lot.

Watch yourselves out there. 🚫

[Reprinted with the author’s permission.—Ed.]

Pat Hahn is the author of two motorcycle-safety books: “Ride Hard, Ride Smart” (2004) [a very advanced (mental) riding-strategy book] and “How to Ride a Motorcycle” (2005) [a guidebook for riders in their first year or two]. The article reprinted here first appeared in Minnesota Motorcycle Monthly (www.motorbyte.com). Go to that website for more safety articles by this author and others.

ORM for Kids

By Cdr. Douglas Keller,
USS *Nimitz* (CVN-68)

[A ship's safety officer talks to his shipmates about operational risk management.—Ed.]

I'm not a person who likes to brag, but I'm proud that, in almost 4,000 hours of flight time, my only pilot-induced damage to an aircraft was over-speeding the flaps on a T-34. It happened on my third flight in flight school. To those who ask how that's possible, I say, "It's a lot of luck, some divine intervention, some good supervision, and a whole lot of ORM."

I didn't realize it at the time, shipmates, but I was taught ORM almost as soon as I could walk. I now teach it to my kids at home, and I want you to think about and use ORM on a minute-by-minute basis, too. My kids don't know these buzz words of ORM, but you do:

Identify Hazards

Consider the major steps in an operation and identify any real or potential condition that can cause mission degradation, injury, illness, or death to personnel, or damage or loss of equipment or property.

Assess Hazards

For each hazard, determine the degree of risk in terms of probability and severity of loss from exposure to the hazard.

Make Risk Decisions

Develop possible risk-control options and evaluate their cost and benefit. The appropriate decision-maker uses cost-versus-benefit analysis to choose the best control(s).

Implement Controls

Plan for the commitment of resources to implement control(s) to eliminate the hazard or reduce the risk.

Supervise

Be proactive and follow up with checks on the effectiveness of control(s).

My kids, however, do get continual training on managing risk, just like I did from my dad. Except in the case of heinously dangerous activities, I do my best to avoid saying "no" to anything. Risk avoidance is not the game here; risk management is.

Instead, I try to be aware when planning or executing anything. I ask questions like, "What's the worst thing that can happen if you do that?" I also may ask questions like these: "How much of your allowance will you have to pay me if something gets broken?" "Do you remember how much it hurt when you fell out of that tree last week?" My goal is to get them thinking about the risk, so that, eventually, they





Even dangerous stuff like this can be done with minimal risk.

will assess every evolution on their own, without my having to ask such questions.

Once they see the risk, I get into risk management. The first thing I teach them to do is ask if the benefit is worth the risk. Then I teach them to ask these questions: How can we minimize the risk? What things (controls) can we do to reduce the risk to an acceptable level? Supervision is critical, as well—not just to make sure everyone behaves, but to make sure the controls we have put in place actually are working.

A good pre-flight/planning brief is important, but even more critical is the post-flight brief, especially if things didn't go exactly as planned. Learning lessons and using that information in the next planning cycle is critical—reinventing the wheel is a terrible waste of resources. A one-time failure can be painful, but it also can be valuable if you use the information you gained. Even better, use someone else's failure as a learning tool.

The CO mentioned ORM this morning. He talked about how naval reactors have a concept of "expected response." Before you do anything, whether it's to throw a switch or to open a valve, you should know what usually happens next—because, if you throw that switch and don't get the expected response, something is wrong with the system. That indication should be a cause for concern and alarm, especially if you're dealing with machinery that could cost people their lives. As an operator, you need to make sure you're getting the expected response, so if

you need to stop for a minute to check it out, do so.

What am I getting at here? Everything you do each day, from the time you get up to the time you go to bed, should be a continual process of assessing risks and managing them. In the last few weeks, we have had a series of liberty- and work-related incidents where, if people had been thinking about the possible risks, they probably wouldn't have put themselves in a dangerous position.

If you're testing machinery and haven't assessed or don't understand the risks beforehand, you're making a big mistake. If you're committing a crime that will land you in jail and haven't thought about what your jail experience will be like (with Bubba—or Bertha—and his—or her—big, nasty friends), you'll be sorry. Ask around; there are too many unnecessary stories of shipmates failing to consider the risks, on and off duty, of what they are doing. Learn from their mistakes.

Walk, talk and eat risk management. You still may get into mishaps, but, at least, they won't be due to your poor planning and lack of risk management. Chances are good that your personal mishap rate will be next to nothing, and, after all, that's our goal here.

Take care of yourself, and help me out by taking care of your shipmates. ■

For more info, go to: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/presentations/orm/default.htm>.

It's Always the Little Things

By Lt. Kris Reid,
VAQ-139

Like most homeowners, I have an addiction to improving my little, personal “kingdom” at every opportunity—perhaps my compulsion is worse than most. In the slack time between deployment cycles, I had redone flowerbeds, planted new trees and trimmed the old ones, and repaired my deck. My greatest achievement, though, was to put down my own flooring.

Each of these jobs had required increasingly more powerful and dangerous equipment. But what greater feeling is there than walking out of a local hardware store with your very own miter saw and pneumatic nail gun?

My latest project required the greatest tool I've had the privilege of using thus far. My neighbor and I each own half of a large strip of land zoned as wetlands, which had been allowed to grow wild for years. We were faced with removing knotted blackberry bushes 10 feet high and covered with thorns. No one had been able to use this land for years. Deer wouldn't even walk in this stuff.

After I had spent a few hours trying to clear a spot with a machete, so I could dump grass from my mower, my fiancée said she thought the thorns had damaged me worse than I had them. Her comment was depressing, considering I only had opened up a 10-foot-by-10-foot hole. I realized this job was going to require more than machetes.

I drove to the nearest heavy-equipment rental shop and quickly signed papers to rent the largest Bobcat tractor on the lot—one that had a monstrous brush hog attached. This thing was bad. It was, by far, the biggest Bobcat I ever had seen. It had huge hydraulic arms that could raise the brush hog 20 feet into the air to smash down whatever brush wouldn't fit under its mower deck. The giant piece of machinery rode on a set of tank treads worthy of an M1A1 tank. The operator had plenty of luxuries, too: an enclosed cockpit nicer than that of the Prowler, a stereo system, and air conditioning. After all, who

wants to sweat while doing yard work? Clearly, we had our machine.

I know what you're probably thinking now: What kind of disaster befell the goober while operating this beast? The answer is nothing. My neighbor and I used it safely, and absolutely no harm came to anything, other than the blackberry bushes, and we actually had fun in the process. Another neighbor who had spent months doing the same thing by hand was almost overcome by grief as he watched us take just hours—in air-conditioned comfort, no less—to clear the bushes. Trees stayed, but everything else was turned into nice, little, mulched up pieces.

The only remaining task was to fill the tank with diesel fuel before the rental guys returned Monday morning to pick up the Bobcat. Here's when I was reminded that even the simplest task can pose a risk. My neighbor and I had filled a few empty tanks with diesel fuel to bring back to the Bobcat. While carrying one of the five-gallon containers from my pickup, I managed to drop the tank on my foot—protected by only a flip-flop. The fuel tank managed to do what chain saws, miter saws, nail guns, and sundry other equipment had failed to accomplish: make me bleed—a lot. Fortunately, no bones were broken, but walking the rest of that night was nearly impossible. Putting my flight boots on the next morning was agony.

Up to that point, I had been proud of myself for considering all the hazards involved. I had worn goggles, gloves, and long sleeves during the “dangerous” part. I never thought once, though, about wearing shoes while handling heavy, slippery containers of diesel fuel. Thankfully, no long-term harm came from this lesson. Instead, I just got a reminder that ORM must be applied continuously. It's not always the big, dangerous tools that cause the most damage. ■

For more info, go to: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/toolbox/home/default.htm>, www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/working_outdoors.pdf, or <http://www.nsc.org/issues/firstaid/toolbox.htm>.

Forgetting ORM on the Slopes



By AK2 Andrew Cook,
VFC-13

One of the great things about being stationed in Fallon, Nev., is the abundance of outdoor activities available. As an on-and-off skier for nearly 16 years, I decided to take advantage of a command-sponsored trip to Mount Rose ski resort in the Reno area. This trip to the slopes would be my first in about six or seven years.

It was a great day for snow skiing. Because of my long layoff, I decided to get a lift ticket for just the beginner-level slopes and work my way back into it. My first run down the mountain was great. I hit every slope I could with the lift ticket I had and soon realized I needed a bigger challenge. With all these warm-ups, I was ready to upgrade my lift ticket.

My first two runs down the intermediate slopes were fast and exhilarating—just what I was looking for, even though I fell a couple of times. At the end of my second run, it started snowing and getting windy, but I never thought anything about it. I took a break, then went up for my third run.

By now, it was snowing harder, and the wind still was blowing. Once I got to the top and started down the hill, I quickly realized something was different from my previous two runs. The slope had become faster, and it was somewhat harder to control my turns. I took a couple of small falls—the kind that embarrass you if shipmates are watching—and then came the big one.

I was turning when the inside edge of my lead ski caught, causing my other ski to cross over it, and then I was airborne. I flipped in mid-air, and, when I hit, I tried to roll. I was partly successful: I hit the way I had pictured, and I rolled, too, but the impact still got me. I came down hard on my right shoulder.

When I finally stopped sliding down the hill, I knew something was wrong—I was done for the day. The pain in my shoulder was severe, and it took a lot of control just to sit up. The ski patrol came and took me off the mountain.

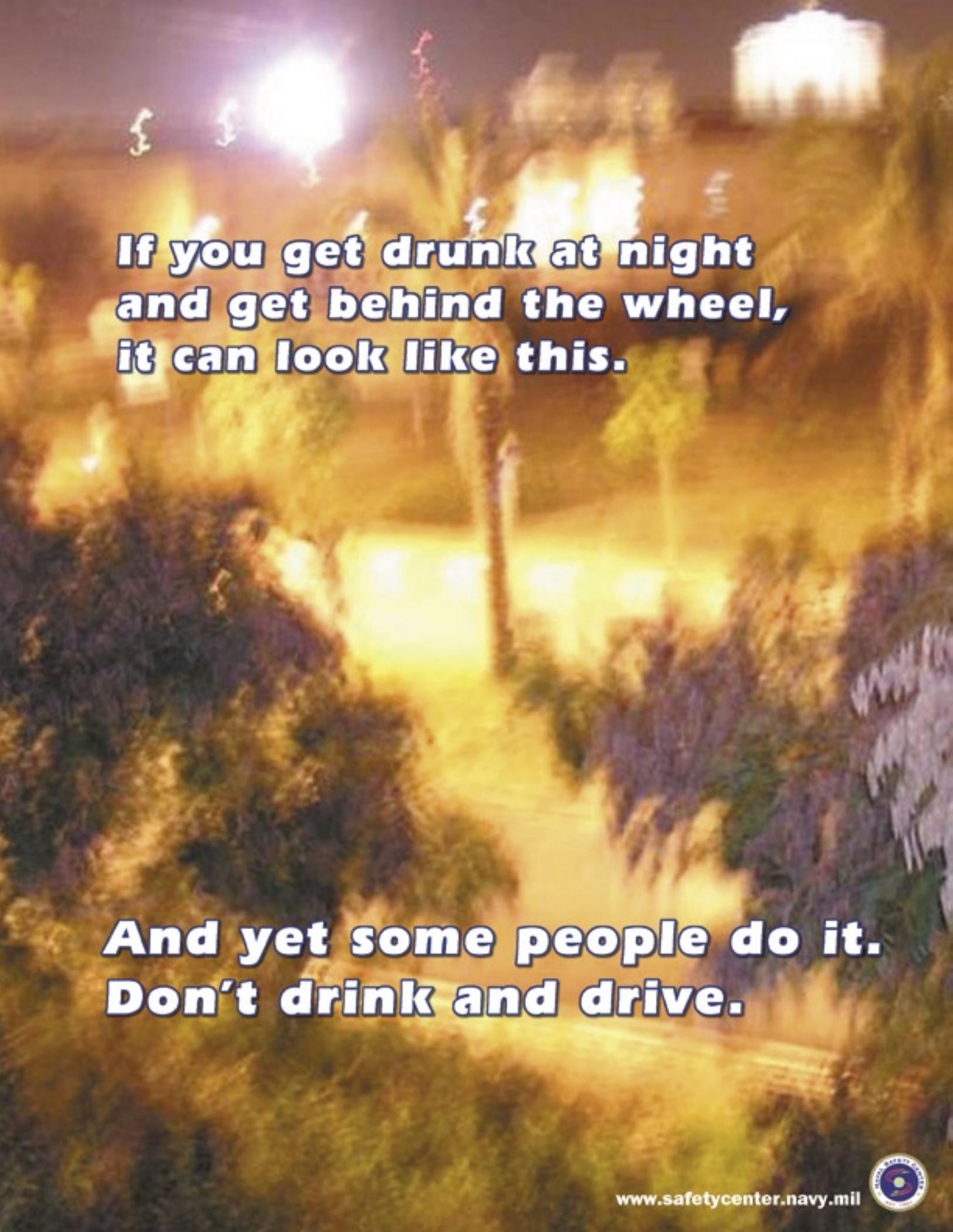
While I was waiting for them, though,

I had looked back up the hill and could see where I first had landed. I slid another 30 or more feet before I stopped.

This incident cost me a type III separation of my shoulder from my collarbone. It will be about six months before I will have full use of my arm again.

My mistake was not using a little more ORM in my playtime. I used it on the beginner slopes, and I even used it when I upgraded to the intermediate slopes. I forgot it, however, when the weather changed. I didn't consider what the snow and wind had done to an otherwise nice day. My skills weren't up to the level required for these new conditions. The next time, I'll stay more alert to what's happening around me. ■

For more info, go to: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/orm/default.htm> or www.nps.navy.mil/safety/osh/CNRSW-Monthly/01-2004_NewsletterNPS2.pdf.



**If you get drunk at night
and get behind the wheel,
it can look like this.**

**And yet some people do it.
Don't drink and drive.**

