

# Cadet Leadership Enrichment Series

Vol. 75 – Best Alive



Francis E. McIntire

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1st edition.

## DEDICATION

To the USAFA Class of Seventy-Five – the Best Alive.



No spit guys, y'all are falcon awesome! Congratulations!

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a work of fiction. The geographic landmarks and historical dates are real. All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.

## CONTENTS

Pairings	iii
Cover Art & Guild	iv
Song of the Day	v
The Glossary	vi
Scripture	xxii
Foreword	xxii
1 Cadet Training	Pg. 1
2 The End of ZI	Pg. 19
3 After Action	Pg. 30
4 Parents Weekend	Pg. 46
5 L'Ecole de l'Air	Pg. 57
6 Bowling Balls	Pg. 62

7	Winnebago Man	Pg. 76
	1 <sup>st</sup> Intermission	
8	Beer Fest	Pg. 91
9	Prophesy	Pg. 109
10	Stardust II	Pg. 121
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Intermission	
11	Psych	Pg. 138
12	Edwards AFB	Pg. 145
13	Night Watch	Pg. 152
14	The Real Air Force	Pg. 161
15	Safety Evangelist	Pg. 177
16	Alpha Roster	Pg. 192
17	June Week	Pg. 198

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the patriots – young, old, and departed. To the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. To the coastal guardians and merchant mariners. To the men and women that support and defend the Constitution and the Commonwealth.

## QUOTABLES

“Brilliant! Let’s make this required reading for freshman English Literature 101.” Dean of Faculty

“Sierra Hotel.” Commandant of Cadets

“This bears more study.” Superintendent



## PAIRINGS

Mud House Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2011  
Gundlach Bundschu Heritage Selection Pinot Noir 2011  
Foretell Spring Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon 2012  
Frog’s Leap (CCOF) Chardonnay, Rutherford 2013  
Jessi’s Red, Blanchard Family, Healdsburg, 2011  
Blue Jacket “Mexican Radio” Imperial Stout, WDC  
Avery “Maharaja” Imperial IPA, Dictator Series  
Dogfish Head 120 Minute IPA, Milton, Delaware, USA  
Snack: Isle de France Brie, with Tamarind compote  
Snack: Bacon-wrapped tiger shrimp with red onion  
Fin: Pamplemousse avec Lyles GS treacle  
After: Gâteau au yaourt avec du chocolat

## COVER ART

Alaska Native Writers and Artists Guild members contribute to the body of work and receive credit for all that they do for the families and children, artists, authors, and illustrators, and for their collaboration with top colleges and universities.

Writers and Artists receive a full page in this Acknowledgements section to showcase their biography, “works by”, studio, contact information, and website.

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*“Submit something in your current portfolio.”*



## SONG OF THE DAY

### *Lovely Jimmy (Meda Man)*

Lovely Jimmy, 'Meda Man,  
When will you come to see me?  
Is it my turn today, please?  
You look good in your dress blues today . . .  
Hey hey hey!

Lovely Jimmy, 'Meda Man,  
The doolies are calling minutes,  
Ready to march to dinner?  
Can we sit together like yesterday?  
Hey hey hey!

### *Cadet Chapel Guide Chorus*

On terrazzo or on the 'vator,  
Don't have a buddy that I like better,  
Ahh-ah-ah Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy 'Meda Man

Lovely Jimmy, 'Meda Man,  
Command Post is playin' Taps now,  
Lay my head on my pillow,  
Dream of you 'till we welcome a new day,  
Hey hey hey!  
(Reprise)

### *Lovely Jimmy, 'Meda Man*

The Seegram Seven Chorale, with  
The Cadet Chapel Guide Chorus  
*(Sung to the melody of Lovely Rita by The Beatles)*

## GLOSSARY



- A-ahhhh** A verbal device used by pilots to garner the attention of air traffic control or a range control officer. “A-ahhhh Albuquerque Center – this is [Call Sign] – requesting unrestricted climb to flight level 500.”
- Aardvark** General Dynamics F-111, Call Sign.
- AFI 11-401** USAF regulation governing the USAFA cadet flight orientation and indoctrination program.
- Afterburner** An appliance installed in a jet engine by the manufacturer to dramatically increase thrust by spraying raw fuel into the engine exhaust. See references for Burner, Reheat.
- Annapolis** The encrypted call sign for the U.S. Naval Academy somewhere in Maryland.
- AOC** Air Officer Commanding. A commissioned officer (any branch) that babysits a cadet squadron consisting of 120 of America’s finest young men and women.
- Arnies** (n.) The encrypted call sign for the cadet student union where upper classmen without cars go to pick up chicks.
- Bacon** (n.) Cured meat from the back or sides of a pig. Connotation: *raison d'être*. Seegram Seven jargon for life and a life worth living.

<b>Back Yard Killer</b>	Gas BBQ Grill being ignited by the AOC with the metal lid in the closed position.
<b>Barbie (AU)</b>	Barbecue, BBQ (US).
<b>Barbie (US)</b>	Hugh Hefner's girlfriend.
<b>Beer Ball Game</b>	The administrative rationale used by AOCs to authorize expenditure of appropriated funds to procure alcoholic beverages for underage cadets.
<b>Beer Response Unit</b>	BRU; a tactical beer delivery system pioneered by One Mile Brewing Co., Darwin NT.
<b>Bijou Bridge</b>	(n.) Classified extraction point used by cadets conducting urban assault missions.
<b>Blue Fox</b>	(n.) Motel on North Nevada that the Director of Admissions said was the haunt of pimps and prostitutes.
<b>Blue Jacket</b>	Brewpub in the Washington Navy Yard with an Imperial Stout called Mexican Radio.
<b>Bring Me Men Ramp</b>	(n.) The base of the ramp leading from the Corvette parking lot by the Mail Room to the Terrazzo.
<b>Broadmoor</b>	The hotel in Colorado Springs where Monty Post spent the weekend before taking the bus to the base of the Bring Me Men Ramp.
<b>Burner</b>	Military jargon for afterburner. See references for Afterburner (US); Reheat (AU).
<b>CCD</b>	(n.) The unofficial organized religion of the Seegram Seven cadets that professed the

Roman Catholic faith.

- CCQ** (n.) The state-sanctioned religion of all Third-Class cadets at Kamp USAFA.
- C-Store** (n.) The forbidden encrypted call sign for the Kamp USAFA Country Store. Xenophons (including cadets' parents) are not permitted to know of the existence of the C-Store.
- Cadet** Term coined by Marie Antoinette to refer to the *soigné* young men who carried the French royalty's golf bags. A term of endearment. Pronounced 'ca-day'.
- Call sign** An aviator's nickname ('Kid', 'Studly', 'Pudly', 'Camper King', 'Don-lee', 'Green Onion', 'Low-renta', 'Mo', 'Mutha', 'Stew', 'Tommy-O', 'Ziggy', etc.) A personification of the aircraft or flight call sign used when communicating with FAA (Qantas Flight 30, Tiger 79, Gambler 77, or US Airways 1549).
- Camp USAFA** The incorrect spelling of the encrypted call sign for the U.S. Air Force Academy (minimum security prison) in Colorado Springs. Correct spelling is 'Kamp USAFA'.
- Corvette** The official and authorized mode of transportation for Cadets First Class.
- DMZ** Demilitarized Zone. North-south hallway in Seegram Seven (overlooking the parade field).
- DVP** Distinguished Visiting Professor
- Dad's Day** (n.) Colloquialism used to describe the day

that cadets invite their fathers out for an autumn football game at Kamp USAFA. Disambiguation: not Father's Day (in June).

- Dash-1** An aircraft flight manual (military aircraft).
- Detachment 5** An agency of the Federal government that is responsible for operational test and evaluation of aircraft, aircraft components, aircraft systems, and aircraft support equipment.
- DoD** The US Department of Defense.
- Do-gooder(s)** A person or people in positions of authority who claim to have the best interest of others in mind; but who continually make decisions that are in their *own* best interest and make decisions that inflict considerable financial or personal harm on others.
- Dodge Coronet 500** 1965 model with 273 cubic-inch V8 abandoned by a graduating cadet and adopted as the Seegram Seven urban assault staff car.
- Doolie(s)** (n.) Member(s) of the freshman class at the Air Force Academy. Syn: Smack, Wad, Plebe.
- Eagle & Fledglings** (n.) Statue of the eagle and little eagles that has the quote "Man's flight through life . . ."
- Elevator** (n.) Mechanical device used to raise and lower cadets and Xenophons to and from the Terrazzo-level at Kamp USAFA. Commonly abbreviated 'Vator. "Hold the 'vator."
- Elite** A person or persons in positions of authority or trust who have no cognitive, behavioral, or

affective recognition or consideration for any person or persons considered to be of a lower social caste or status. See: Predatory Elite.

- Ethics** (n.) The practice of telling lies with the objective of not hurting the feelings of a female of the species. Example: ‘We can’t go steady because I promised my mother I would marry a member of the Rosicrucian sect back in her home country.’ Ethical lies do not constitute an Honor Violation (HV).
- F-111** General Dynamics ‘Aardvark’ aircraft used for long-range interdiction and strike operations by U.S. and coalition forces.
- Faculty Puke** (n.) A commissioned officer selected to impart academic learning to cadets at Kamp USAFA. Tradition holds that the majority of these hail from Dubuque, Iowa.
- Falcon** (n.) The official mascot of the U.S. Air Force Academy (minimum security prison), also known as Kamp USAFA.
- ‘Falcon A’** (n.) The hearty and bodacious cheer or victory toast that is passed down from one generation of cadets to the next generation.
- First Aid Kit** (n.) A Squadron Faculty Officer’s bag-of-tricks. Contains handkerchief, a dime (to call a chaplain), and a list of phrases to comfort a cadet who just flunked out or who was just dumped by his high school sweetheart.
- Firstie Locker Room** (n.) Place where upper class cadets stash their quart bottles of Budweiser beer and fifths of

Seagram's Benchmark Bourbon tucked inside black combat boot socks.

<b>Firstie Parking Lot(s)</b>	(n.) Sensitive but unclassified (SBU) strategic storage facilities for General Motors' inventory of wartime readiness Chevy Corvettes (to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic).
<b>Flight level</b>	The height of an aircraft above mean sea level, measured in hundreds of feet. Example: flight level five-zero-zero is fifty-thousand feet above mean sea level.
<b>Garden of the Gods</b>	(n.) Senior officer housing in Douglass Valley.
<b>Gate</b>	A portmanteau derived from the words 'gay' and 'eight'. See: Portmanteau.
<b>GI</b>	Government Issue.
<b>Hombre (SP)</b>	Bruce (AU), Bloke (UK), Dude (US).
<b>Honor</b>	(n.) The condition of being without reproach in regard to lying, stealing, or cheating. Disambiguation: See Ethics.
<b>Janitor</b>	A problem solver or 'mess cleaner' the likes of Monty Post or any other in a number of interns-in-residence at Kamp USAFA. An evoker or invoker of the SolvIt philosophy. See: Plumber.
<b>Jody Calls</b>	(n.) Marching songs that contain obscene language that can be instantly translated into 'Sunday school' language when Touri are

detected hanging over the Chapel wall.

- Jungle** A suffix applied to the title of a book that renders the very contents of the book sacred to the inhabitants of Kamp USAFA. Example: the book title *Acronym Jungle* renders the glossary sacred & unimpeachable.
- KAFA** Kamp USAFA FCC-approved AM radio station broadcasting Radio Free USAFA, KAFA Radio Dinner, KAFA After Taps, and other popular programs.
- Kamp USAFA** (n.) The avante-garde society of future leaders, clandestine crime-fighters, and safety evangelists disguised as a fully functioning minimum security prison in Colorado.
- Kanoodling** (v.) Unauthorized maneuver for Kamp USAFA cadets. Synonym: PDA. Indulgences for Lawrence Paul and Farish Memorial.
- Kitchen** (n.) The unsecure location at Arnold Hall where Touri congregate to graze and to exchange raw spice, spice mélange, tea leaves, and coffee.
- Lad** (n.) A term of endearment when used as a hyphenated suffix (i.e.; Pudly-Lad). A term of derision when the native term is used to address a Tourist or an under-classman.
- Laddie** (n.) An unambiguous term of endearment.
- Ladiolo** (n.) A term used to communicate supreme awe and respect.



<b>Leader</b>	(n.) A freshman cadet that knows the first verse of the National Anthem and the Air Force Song and sings that first verse loudest and with many ‘balls’ in his voice. By the time that everyone chimes in, the upper-class cannot tell who is singing and who is not.
<b>Lending Library</b>	(n.) The Seegram Seven’s TV Room Library containing every back-issue of Playboy.
<b>Library</b>	(n.) The secure but unclassified study hall frequented by doolies to escape the upper classmen in their squadron at Kamp USAFA.
<b>Life’s Better Here</b>	The signature tag line for Seegram Seven.
<b>Litch</b>	An abbreviation for Litchfield.
<b>Litchfield</b>	A fictional location in the Southern Colorado that inspires travelers to go to and from, and to return back again. Always abbreviated when referring to a trip to and from, or back again. E.g.: ‘Let’s take a quick jet to Litch.’
<b>Mach</b>	A reference to the speed of sound measured in units. Example: an aircraft traveling Mach-4 is flying four times the speed of sound.
<b>Maëstro</b>	(n., Italian etymology) Literal translation: ‘master’. Connotation: master teacher from the original Latin ‘Magister’. Example: Magister Ludi, the master of the game.
<b>Meanest Mutha</b>	(n.) Meanest Mother-F***** in the (Jack’s) Valley. A proper pronoun that created great confusion during Parents Weekend. Doolies attempting to explain the meaning of

‘Meanest Mutha’ to their mothers during Parents Weekend would result in potential Honor Violations (HVs) or give cause for their moms to wash their mouths out with soap in the Broadmoor Hotel bathroom.

- Meatless Combo** (n.) Vegetarian pizza served by Giuseppe’s Central. (Kamp USAFA vernacular) Two-man roommates who are both engaged to be married after graduation.
- Meatless Wonder** (n.) First, second, or third-class cadet who is engaged to be married after graduation. See: Spineless Wonder.
- Mighty Fine** Akin to ‘darn fine’ in the common vernacular. At times, a wistful prayer with hopes that all will end well when conditions or circumstances are less than optimal.
- Miss Penelope** (proper noun) The Supt’s civilian ambassador to Arnold Hall. Call sign: Miss ‘P’.
- Mitches Mountain** (n.) A sterling silver platter that is piled with an obscene number of scoops of super-premium ice-cream, topped with no less than fourteen different flavors (that include hot-fudge, caramel, bananas, nuts, cherries, etc.).
- Monty Post** The enigmatic graduate of the cadet wing and Vietnam veteran rumored to be living in the tunnels, scrounging for leftovers in Mitchell Hall, and posing as an Australian-exchange officer and DVP to hit on cadets’ girlfriends and mothers during June Week. See: DVP.

<b>Mrs. Robinson</b>	(n.) Classified call sign developed by the tenth graduating class. Term refers to an AOC's wife that is deemed 'super-hot'. Use case: "Check out the rack on Mrs. Robinson."
<b>Navajo Hogan</b>	Biker bar on North Nevada Avenue declared 'off limits' by the Commandant of Cadets.
<b>Not Too Fine</b>	Synonym for 'fine'; as in beautiful (adjective), or exquisitely (adverb). A Seegram Seven exclamation with emphasis on the middle word; i.e., 'not TOO fine'.
<b>OCONUS</b>	Outside the Continental United States
<b>OIC</b>	(n.) Officer in Charge. Kamp USAFA term.
<b>Outpatient Surgery</b>	To get a haircut from Cowboy Bob in the cadet barber shop one floor above the Country Store. See: C-Store.
<b>PDA</b>	Public Display of Affection; See: Kanoodling.
<b>PI</b>	Philippine Islands.
<b>Pants (AU)</b>	Knickers (US), Trou (Mil).
<b>Pegasus</b>	The Mobil Oil Corporation flying horse repurposed by Kamp USAFA security to ensure that females bussed onto campus were qualified to dance with cadets.
<b>Philistine</b>	Hypocrite.
<b>Plumber</b>	A problem solver or 'leak fixer' in residence at Kamp USAFA. An evoker or invoker of the SolvIt philosophy. See: Janitor.

- Portmanteau** A double-sided suitcase and metaphor for a new word that is a fusion of two other words. Example: the term ‘Gate’ is a portmanteau, a fusion of the words ‘gay’ and ‘eight’.
- Predatory Elite** A person or persons in positions of authority or trust who have no cognitive, behavioral, or affective recognition for or consideration of any person or persons considered to be of a lower social caste or status – and take every opportunity to inflict grave harm to the financial standing of those they consider common, unworthy, or ‘less-than’. See: Elite.
- Randy** (n.) Nickname for a Yank named Randall; (adj.) an excessively romantic hombre.
- Reheat** (n., Australian) The portion of a jet engine designed to increase thrust by spraying raw fuel into the engine exhaust. Synonym: Afterburner, ‘Burner (US).
- Return to Sender** (n.) A swingin’ hit by Elvis (popular with the Class of ‘59). Unobtrusive ‘Dear John’ letter from a girl back home that was a 7 or less.
- Return to Mother** (n.) A ‘Dear John’ letter from a super-hot chick back home that includes a Polaroid snapshot of the girl in bed with her new civilian (long-haired, loser) boyfriend.
- RON** Acronym: Remain Overnight at a military installation. Not a ‘gas and go’. A stay at the overnight transient quarters within crawling distance of the military clubs.
- Ruling Class** See: Elite; Predatory Elite.

<b>SOD</b>	(n.) Senior Officer of the Day.
<b>Safety Minute</b>	Squadron report of a devastating accident or injury that is transformed into a teaching moment to extend life and prevent recurrence.
<b>Seegram Seven</b>	A subdivision of Kamp USAFA that boasts a reputation for having cadets who dominate Malanaphy sports heritage; quick access to the tunnels and hot chicks, and stairwells that can drain 10,000 kiloliters of water per minute.
<b>Sheila (AU)</b>	(n.) Chick (US).
<b>Showering</b>	Singing.
<b>Smoking Lamp</b>	(n.) The ruby-colored obelisk suspended from the ceiling of the 'Mitches' staff tower that signals for all upper-class cadets to light up.
<b>SMUT Trial</b>	(n.) An administrative punishment that is one level more serious than an Article 15. Administered exclusively by the cadet leadership in Seegram Seven.
<b>Soigné</b>	(adj., French, masc.) Well-groomed, elegant dress and appearance, dapper; in the tradition of Monty Post. Feminine form: Soignée.
<b>Solstice</b>	The celestial events marked by the sun being at the greatest relative distance from the earth's equator, to the north or to the south.
<b>SolvIt</b>	A state of mind that compels both the sender and receiver to plug a leak or clean up a mess. See: Janitor; Plumber.

<b>Song-of-the-Day</b>	The gift of a new song that blesses the giver as well as the recipient.
<b>Spice</b>	(n.) Commodity brokered and blended by the Touri of Arnold Hall. Spice is traded or consumed in its native form or blended in hopes to achieve the penultimate ‘spice mélange’ that extends life.
<b>Spineless Wonder</b>	See: Meatless Wonder.
<b>Spirit Cheese</b>	(n.) The plastic-wrapped single-sliced yellow cheese that is hurled across Mitchell Hall during the evening meal before a home football game.
<b>Spiritual Warfare</b>	Recognition that we are in a battle, not against flesh and blood – we are in a battle against powers and principalities (including West Point and Annapolis).
<b>Squadron Sweetheart</b>	(n.) Photograph of a ‘hot chick’ purported to be the girlfriend of the cadet submitting her photo for the contest. Exclusions: cadets’ sisters, hot mothers, ex-girlfriends, or chicks’ pictures cut out of high school yearbooks.
<b>Strawberry Mung</b>	(n.) The delicious purple seed-filled custard that upper classmen tell doolies was produced from a most questionable source.
<b>Studio54</b>	The secure but unclassified workspace where Seegram Seven cadets kick back to play foosball, open mail, and return phone calls.
<b>Suboptimization</b>	The universal practice of taking positive and deliberate action to optimize the performance

of **one** feature or characteristic of a system; while allowing the entire system to fail. Analogy: the act of ‘putting lipstick on a pig’.

- Summer solstice** The celestial event marked by the sun being the furthest north distance from the Earth’s equator; the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.
- Sunday School** The unofficial organized religion of the many diverse people groups of Kamp USAFA.
- Sunday School Picnic** The only packaging and labeling that would prevent ‘frangers’ from devouring leftovers. For a Tourist to devour the contents of a massive food cache labeled ‘Sunday School Picnic’ would be anathema.
- Sweetchie** A poultice of tobacco used to invigorate the subject and suppress the appetite temporarily.
- TAC** Tactical Air Command
- Tiki Bird** A native species of Ethiopia rumored to be extinct; then reintroduced in a questionable campaign to save the endangered species.
- Touri** (n.) The hapless and indigenous population groups around Kamp USAFA. Included on the list are individual tourists, touri, government employees, and any people groups that are unfamiliar with the cadet lingo used by the residents of Seegram Seven and other Kamp USAFA inmates. Allowances are made for good-looking females that demonstrate a penchant for kanoodling.

<b>Tree Top</b>	(n.) Call sign for the KAFA DJ when hammering out warnings in Morse code.
<b>Trousers (Mil)</b>	Pants (Civ).
<b>Truth-teller(s)</b>	(n.) A person or persons in a position of trust whose speech is characterized by a barrage of true statements that are designed to garner the trust and confidence of others. Once trust is established, they present a diabolical lie (from the Devil) now accepted as fair dinkum.
<b>Tunnel</b>	(n.) The subterranean storage area for upper-class beer, whiskey, Madera wine in casks, and was rumored to be a late-night hangout for the cadets in Dirty Thirty. Legend holds that there are more than 345 miles of tunnels.
<b>Universe</b>	(n.) The cosmic entity that spews out evil-doers (do-gooders and truth-tellers), and that rewards good cadets with a Chevrolet Corvette upon completion of their second-class final exams.
<b>USAFE</b>	The United States Air Forces in Europe.
<b>‘Vator</b>	(n.) Abbreviation for elevator.
<b>‘Vator Shaft</b>	(n.) An elevator shaft that can drain 2,000 kiloliters of water per minute.
<b>Vault</b>	(n.) A Cold War fallout shelter that remains hidden in an underground tunnel at Kamp USAFA. Repurposed by Monty Post and others to plan and execute secret missions during times of great danger or national emergency.



<b>Vault 2</b>	(n.) The Kamp USAFA annex that is disguised as a fully functioning pizzeria serving a 3.2 percent alcohol beer. Unclassified name: Giuseppe's Central.
<b>Walkabout (AU)</b>	Vision Quest (US).
<b>Wally (AU)</b>	(n.) Nickname for a Yank named Walter; (n.) term for an excessively obtuse hombre.
<b>Watcher(s)</b>	Monty Post and the Kamp USAFA security team. The seemingly passive moniker belies the active and aggressive role that they take in subjugating evil across the land.
<b>Wealth</b>	(n.) Accumulated assets that are either harnessed to industry or held in reserve at the time value of money. Incorrectly defined (in the common vernacular) as revenue, income, or savings that are held in reserve to purchase commodities.
<b>Whiskey Delta</b>	(n.) Top Secret call sign for all non-Kamp USAFA males of the species.
<b>Zeitgeist</b>	(n., German) literal translation: The ghost of the current time frame. Connotation: the prevailing spirit or consciousness of the times that we are living in now (or since 1955). The 'vibe' in Seegram Seven.

Holy Writ

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD,  
plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give  
you hope and a future.

- Jeremiah 29:11, New International Version

Quote

*When I want to read a book, I write one.*

Benjamin Disraeli, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,  
in 1868; and from 1874 - 1880

Song-of-the-Day

Jethro Tull – *Locomotive Breath*

Author: Ian Anderson, 1971 (date of birth August 10,  
1947), incorrectly referred to as 'Jethro Tull'.

## FOREWORD

ON July 5 in the year of our Lord, Nineteen Seventy-One, a weather-beaten bus pulled up to the base of the Bring Me Men Ramp and deposited its scruffy retinue into the hands of the tormentors. This bus was not one of the fleet of stainless steel, Navy blue, and chrome VanHool busses that the super sergeants in transportation would use to take cadets to the Kamp USAFA Airfield in summer, or to the slopes of Vail and Breckenridge in winter. Nor were these the midnight blue executive coaches that delivered day laborers to the stadium seven hours before kickoff at Falcon Stadium. This was one of the Blue Bird school busses painted National School Bus Yellow, chrome yellow, BASF #87363. These school busses and drivers were on loan from Palmer and Wasson High schools. A form of ‘insurance’ to make sure that the high school girls graduating four years from now would have an abundance of future husbands and Cadet Chapel weddings.

Unlike the ‘yellow school bus dreams’ that dropped future cadets off downtown completely naked, this was no dream. In fact, one Class of ‘75 candidate was certain that he heard one of the more boisterous ten-foot-tall upper-class cadets announce

the beginning of “. . . your worst nightmare, Smack!”

The now empty high school yellow school bus closed its folding doors, shifted into low gear, and lurched forward to begin the long trip back to the Broadmoor Hotel to pick up the next load of future troublemakers.

The Broadmoor Hotel was the unlikely beneficiary of an innocent mistake perpetrated by the Kamp USAFA Admissions Office and the unscrupulous Director of Admissions. With the U.S. and coalition forces still reeling from the Tet Offensive and Charlie Kong’s relentless assault on Khe Sanh, volunteerism was at an all-time low.

Rod Stewart was still charting #1 (on both coasts) with *Maggie May*, Playboy signed Hamilton, Joe Frank, and Reynolds who were rocking the charts with *Don’t Pull Your Love*, and Three Dog Night’s thinly veiled and unobtrusive anti-war song *Joy to the World* was moving up nicely. The Jewish guy named Norman Greenbaum’s groovy little Christian number *Spirit in the Sky* was still getting air play. Glen Campbell and Jimmy Webb’s *Galveston* had hit #4 a year ago and was firmly entrenched as the unofficial state song of Texas. It would be years before *Galveston* would be accused of being an anti-war protest song. Procol Harum’s *Whiter Shade of Pale* was well on its way to becoming the most played song in history thanks to the mass proliferation of elevators and doctors’ offices.

“Men, when you talk with your candidates, parents’ groups, and high school counselors, I want you to tell them ‘they will eat like kings, and they will go first class’ everywhere they travel.” He paused. “Then tell them that fighter pilots are a dime-a-dozen and that we are lookin’ for leaders.” The Admissions Officer scowled as if to say, ‘Do you understand me?’. Liaison Officers nodded like bobble-headed and victorious Baltimore Colts replicas following their win over the

Cowboys in Super Bowl V that January. Just a month ago.

As fast as the Congressional and Vice-Presidential nominations rolled in, parents and guardians made reservations for themselves and their sons at the historical Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado for a good night's rest before reporting for the kind of duty that makes parents and grandparents very proud. The cost? Just \$24 bucks a night. But that's when twenty-four bucks was 24 bucks. Was it worth it? Well hell ya. The Broadmoor had a swimming pool and a view of the Will Rogers Shrine. They also had a small pond with motorboats and water skiing. (Short tow ropes of course.) They had a nice golf course, but the Class of '75 cadets would not learn to golf for another three years. Some parents worked their future leaders into a frenzy over dinner in the Tavern, the Penrose Room, or in the Garden Room by asking them if they thought they would make a career out of the Air Force, or even if they thought they would make Brigadier General 'below the zone'.

Other mistakes were made.

After high school graduation some parents had already made the false step of buying their sons a snazzy new sports car like a Datsun B-210 or the exotic Studebaker Avante as a reward for getting into a prestigious service academy. Some of the appointees bought their main squeeze an engagement ring that carried the promise of an elite Cadet Chapel wedding in four short years. Still, some kissed off their high school or prep school final exams in favor of embarking on one last vision quest before reporting to the prestigious Air Force Academy. These vision quests were nothing more than an extended senior skip day. Most would simply refer to them as a week-long 'bender'.

The gift of a sports car and the promise of a wedding proved

to be the undoing of more than a few of the cadet candidates.

The majority, however, did report for duty and were in-processed in the typical fashion. Recruits lined up for haircuts and inoculations, were sized for shoes and uniforms, and each was issued a giant cardboard box that included a copy of the Cadet Wing Regulations in a three-inch three ring binder and a huge glass ashtray. Cigarettes would come later.

Over the next few days the new class of 1975 would be taught how to self-propel, check mail, and salute. They would be taught to stand still without looking around too much. To look around when you were standing at the base of the Bring Me Men Ramp was considered anathema. Ten years earlier an American folk musician named Harry Chapin stood where we were standing now. He looked around and eventually went back to New York to resume his musical career. No matter. In the fullness of time Harry was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for humanitarian work. He would also come out to the Cadet Field House a few years from now to play a concert for all of us.

Time really flew by and we are packing our bags now for a two-week Christmas break. A year ago, the Falcons played at the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans while we were still in high school. This fall, the Falcon football team played Navy at home and we got to see the uniforms that were worn by the likes of John Paul Jones, Commodore Stephen Decatur, and Admiral David Farragut. The fashion had not changed much. Army was an away game this fall, so only the firsties and some of the two-degrees got to go to West Point to see the guys that dressed like Edgar Allan Poe, Ulysses S. Grant, and Robert E. Lee.

Some of the doolies are quietly packing everything (because they are not returning after Christmas break). Two roommates (heavy smokers) made a last-ditch effort to clean the plate-glass

windows by wiping a lily-white cadet bath towel across the surface. The brown nicotine stain was impressive. The towel was tossed on top of the already full trash can. The trash can in my room was completely empty. That's because I knew that I would stay at Kamp USAFA and to do so I must keep my trash can completely empty.

One of the doolies that had entertained us with his twelve-string Simon and Garfunkel songs was leaving for good to marry his high school sweetheart and have lots of babies and read books to them. They were both nineteen.



One of our C4C classmates would leave with every expectation of returning after Christmas break but we would never see him again. That kind of thing happened.

Next year would be different. Sophomores' girlfriends would sense the drawdown of the Vietnam war, the anticipated end of the draft, and the return of the American POWs. 'Get the heck out of there – now!' they yelled over the banks of phones in the New Dorm, Fairchild Hall, and over at Arnie's.

That was devastating for us. The ones that remained. We were losing some of the best friends that we would ever make in this life or the next. But all the same, there were more of us staying than leaving.

*So what, I thought. So what if I don't get to live my dream of flying the F-4C Phantom in combat over North Vietnam and taking out the Paul Doumer Bridge. So what if I don't get to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic by prosecuting the war from the front seat of the J79-powered chariot.*

*Just need to get past Spring Break and Hell Week and then I'll be able to see what the future holds, I thought.*

*Sure, SERE, Soaring, then Leave. Spit-hot summer assignments, I thought.*



Something more though. America's *Horse with no Legs* was moving up the charts. The funny-sounding guy named Rod Stewart released *Maggie May* last summer (as we made our way to Kamp USAFA) and followed up with *You Wear it Well* after Hell Week. The Doobie Brothers and their radio song *Listen to the Music* got us back home for three-degree summer leave. At first people laughed, but then they listened. Laughed at Rod Stewart's funny voice. Laughed at the name 'Doobie Brothers'. And we got laid back home to the Chi-Lites' *Oh Girl* (indeed!).



My summer schedule would be perfect, then the big enchilada. Only a 2.5% chance of being assigned to the illustrious and highly acclaimed Seegram Seven squadron. To have two of us from Dirty Thirty re-assigned to the Malanaphy Trophy perpetual winner was uncanny. The director of cadet probabilities and sadistics would affirm that the permutations and combinations were self-evident.

“The math don’t lie,” he said in a true-blue Kentucky drawl. “Take boards,” he commanded with a clap of his hands and then he moved ever closer to make his point.

My roommate’s frequent recital of the limerick came to mind.

*There once was a girl from Kentuck’,* I thought, then paused.

The instructor approached and scratched out the formula in rhythmic staccato with the chalk on the blackboard.

“Point zero-two-five times point zero-two-five equals point zero-zero-zero-six-two-five,” he said as his hand clawed the chalk and obediently rendered the solution to the problem.

I nodded with respect.

“Do you get me men?” he barked, spraying each syllable with military precision.

“We get you sir!” we all responded in unison.

Then he turned to face me with barely an inch between our noses. He whispered.

“You don’t stand a snowball’s chance of getting assigned to Seegram Seven with that classmate of your’n,” he concluded. “Write that down.”

“Yessir,” I added with a measure of respect, hoping he would collect his papers and go help some other freshmen.

*This smucker’s a sick puppy,* I thought.

“No sir,” I added as soon as he asked me if I thought it would be a good idea to supplant the needs of the Air Force

with my personal preferences.

I glanced at the fruit salad on the chest of his Alpha blouse. Green weenie, fruit salad, Vietnam era medal. *Thnick*, I thought. *A bad habit picked up from a classmate*. Keep looking. Purple heart. OK, I thought. *Keep looking*, I thought. *Faster. Faster. He's starting to notice*, I thought.

"Men, do you have a solution to this man's problem?" he asked the whole class. "I can't hear you!"

"Sir, yes sir" everyone lied.

Nobody had a clue.

One in 1,600 probability that the both of us would be assigned to Seegram Seven. One in 3,200 probability that both of us would graduate. Then it happened. Then I thought the unthinkable.

Silence. *Try harder young man*.

Impossible. *A coded message from my dad, from Norwich University. 'I will try.'*

*How can this be?* I asked myself.

A vision of my father, WWII B-26 navigator. Gently guiding the aerial platform over the fatherland. Bombing the heck out of Dresden, Peenemunde, and Berlin.

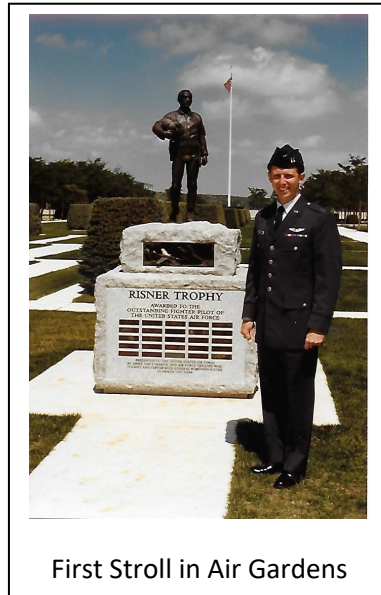
*This man is a faculty puke. Don't listen to him Frankie.*

There, I heard it again.

*Don't listen to him Frankie, he's full of spit like a Christmas goose.*

There, I heard it again. *My old man had been tested as an Army Air Corps navigator. He's warning me!*

As I walked back across the terrazzo to get the last of my stuff from Dirty Thirty, I heard the speakers blasting the cool



First Stroll in Air Gardens

notes of the new Bill Withers song *Lean on Me*. The upperclassmen in the floor below Dirty Thirty were playing the song *Iron Man* over and over again. Four brand-spankin' new Akai speakers each the size of the new Saab Sonnet were aimed into the middle of the quad'. As I executed a snappy face left (just for the heck of it) knowing that the end of Hell Week was in the distant past (just two days ago) I heard the bouncy new tune fill the New Dorm hallway – *The Candy Man*, by Sammy Davis, Jr.

*Gotta move quickly and high-tail it out of the squad*, I thought to myself. The Class of '74 are still required by Cadet Wing Regulation 27.4352.20237-0123 to pull CCQ duty until the smacks cum recognized fourth-class cadets are trained to perform the duty. *They'll not hesitate one whit*, I thought, *to ask me to 'sit in' while they 'go to the head', then disappear downtown for the rest of the weekend. Then I'll be up the creek without a paddle. Technically, I can't even protest on grounds of an Honor Violation. Technically, he would execute the infamous 'touch 'n go maneuver (even if he didn't need to wizz) and make sure he made one or two obscene remarks about the temperature of the water in the urinal. Remarks that could be brought into the proceedings if he was ever accused of requesting a CCQ 'sit-in' and not using the head.*

The last day of academics.

Guys would be pushing laundry carts full of dresser drawers full of clothes and cadet uniforms to be installed in dressers and closets for the Saturday Morning Inspection scheduled for the first weekend after the first week of classes for the fall semester.

Football teams would be already practicing during the summer months. USAA and the Shifty Fifty would sponsor the Häagen-Dazs and Baskin-Robbins 'jock ramps' for the varsity footballers and the other fall sports teams.

Falcon stadium would be peppered with white tents of

graduate classes staking their claims for tailgate parties.

*Winning football teams for the alums, I thought. Just like doolie year, first semester. A date with the hot chick at the Fairchild Hall candy store? Parking for the faculty, dancing lessons in A-Hall, the Padre's film festival in the Smack Bar. What else?*

*There once was a man from Dubuque,  
Who was commissioned an officer to boot,  
But time would reveal, and destiny would seal,  
His role as a faculty puke.  
I love it, but you can't use it.*

*Bob Hope, I thought. Is that you Mister Hope. Are you still alive? Is this a USO show? Can I get your autograph?. No! Why not?, I thought.*

*My other instructors just got back from Vietnam. Stories about putting a Mk-82 slick through the upper window of an apartment building in Hanoi, down-town.*

*Stories about the C-130 gunship, laying down a hail of lead upon the enemies of the Constitution of the Unites States. All enemies foreign and domestic.*

*My other instructor flew the F-100 Super Saber in Vietnam.*

*The other instructor flew a Misty FAC. Threw hand grenades out of the cockpit window. Pulled the pin and put them in a Skippy peanut butter jar. The glass broke and released the spoon when it hit the ground.*

*My AOC flew an OV-10 Bronco and saw Charley Kong riding his bike up the hill. He turned to meet him at the crest of the hill with the landing gear extended. Heard a 'bump'. When he taxied back to chocks the crew chief barfed. Charlie's head was wedged between the left main strut and the landing gear door.*

*Paul Mauriat and his orchestra were rocking Billboard with the new song Love is Blue (Lamour et Bleu).*

*That hot Americano chick from Salinas was a surprise. I wonder if she would like to be my Squadron Sweetheart?*



Seagrams Squadron Sweetheart – Call Sign: Indian Princess

*Heard that Steve Ritchie, Class of '64 shot down two MiG 21s.  
My stats instructor is non-rated, I thought while sleeping in Poly  
Sci. Chemistry teacher is cool. Told us that his favorite four things were  
wine, women, song, and chemistry.  
Got a Dear John letter from my girlfriend back home. It had a polaroid  
with her and her new boyfriend (naked in bed) so I sent it to her mother.  
Ba bum ba ba ba, ba bum ba ba ba, ba bum ba ba ba baaa baaa.  
“Room, A-ten Hut.”  
Whaaaaat.  
I awoke from the dream.*



## SONG OF THE DAY

### *Monologue*

Are you optimistic,  
'Bout the way the bugle's playin'  
That they'll hold the vator now for you 'n me? (ya, ya, ya)

Don't you think he's crazy?  
The new guy in the squad?  
The guy we know as our new AOC?  
Our new AOC? Ya, ya, yah!

Have you seen his new ol' lady?  
They call her Mrs. Robinson? (*Hmmm*)  
She shore looks good in those brand new high heels,  
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

### *Cadet Chapel Guide Chorus*

She baked a batch of cookies,  
Brought 'em right into the squad,  
Set 'em right there by the Coke machine,  
The 'CQ' ate 'em all, ya, ya, ya!

Days to graduation, well I lost count long ago,  
Don't you think we'll get a weekend pass for free? (*ya, ya, ya*)  
I haven't had one lately, can't remember when,  
Gotta get downtown to make it back to G's,  
Yeah, yeah, yeah . . .  
(Reprise)

### *Monologue*

The Seegram Seven Chorale, with  
The Cadet Chapel Guide Chorus  
(*Sung to the melody of Dialogue by Chicago*)

## 1 CADET TRAINING

“A-TEN-HUT.”

The cadet wing slouched to attention on the terrazzo under the sweltering dry heat of the first week in August, 1972. Elton John and Bernie Taupin’s *Rocket Man* was holding its own on the frequency modulation band. The summer hit by Looking Glass *Brandy (You’re a Fine Girl)* released a few weeks earlier was going strong. The ‘Stones rocked KAFA with the groovy tune *Tumbling Dice* and the full album finally made it into the C-Store from the coasts. Billy Paul’s *Me and Mrs. Jones* was moving up the charts and blasting into the quads. The Department Head of English and Leadership was adamant that “Mrs. Jones and I” was the grammatically correct subject of the sentence.

“Y’all hold your horses,” whispered the Seegram Seven squadron commander to the cadets in the first two rows.

He executed a snappy about face and dropped his saber to complete the salute. “You ready for classes to start,” whispered one Seegram Seven flight commander to his flight sergeant. The hapless two-degree just shrugged as if to say ‘Dunno.’

‘Wanka-wanka, wanka, wanka, wanka, wanka-wanka,’ was all that the cadets heard of the new Commandant’s announcement

over the weather-beaten communication squadron standard issue loudspeakers bracketing the marble strips.

“Too bad Robin Olds retired,” whispered one Seegram Seven flight commander to the three-degree guidon-bearer standing directly in front of him. “This guy needs to get the dick out of his mouth.”

For the majority of the cadet wing, today was just like any other day – with one exception. The fresh crop of three-degrees would make the processional march from the bottom of the Bring Me Men Ramp up to the terrazzo-level to join their new squadrons.

For the firsties, two-degrees, and smacks of Seegram Seven the zeitgeist was more like the excitement of the NFL Draft in New York City back in January. Just as the Buffalo Bills scooped up the Notre Dame Defensive End Walt Patulski, the cadets of Seegram Seven were about to ‘draft’ a fresh crop of stellar athletes. This was no accident.



“Class of Seventy-Five,” he paused, “forward-harch”.

The class-appointed president of the third-class and editor of the Dodo Magazine led his classmates in formation up the ramp.

Then, the jody calls rang out.

*Your mother was there when you left, you're right;*

*Your father was there when you left, you're right,*

*Sound off, ay-ob, sound off a-ob, sound off ay-ob, ay-ob, sound off!”*



And up they came bobbing in formation and preparing for the processional ‘split-off’ to their new squadrons.

Most of the cadet wing seniors and juniors were anticipating a month or so of pain-in-the-aft training to indoctrinate the new three-degrees into the ‘culture’ of their proud squadron. Not so for Seegram Seven. The ‘Malanaphy Trophy Squad’ had a ‘new look’ that they would usher in with this new crop. A fresh inculcation of athleticism.

There was the Fightin’ First who would have been great except that they were too far out of the mainstream to be considered seriously. They were at the top of the east end of Vandenberg Hall and had to go all the way down to the second floor to get to the C-Store, barber shop, cadet radio station, cadet photography lab, or the Model Airplane Club (MAC) on the ground floor. Their access to the tunnels was abysmal.

Then there was Military Fifteen. A collection of West Point and Annapolis wannabes. Why would perfectly capable adolescents consign themselves to become the bane of the rest of the USAFA cadet wing (during a perfectly respectable war) and the entire female population of Colorado just to compete for the few “Future AOCs of America” internships available each year? No doubt that Cowboy Bob and the staff at the cadet barber shop appreciated them though. Mob boss John Gotti was purported to be getting a haircut every day. Not to be outdone, many of the Military 15 seniors popped into the barber shop two or even three times a day. ‘Just to get a trim,’ you understand.

Dirty Thirty was reeling from the loss of two very talented athletes, one football and one track and field, to you guessed it – Seegram Seven. The other New Dorm squadrons had their share of misfortune what with the Green Onion cutting a swath through the dorms and tunnels with his swagger stick, and what

with the Dempsey Dumpster corporation losing its lucrative government contract – the one they held since 1957.

One newsworthy moment was the recent New Dorm graduate who drove off with Kamp USAFA in his rear-view mirror in a brand-new baby-blue Jaguar XKE convertible. He is gone now, but the cadet wing was marched into Arnold Hall auditorium this summer to renew their pledge and commitment to drive only General Motors products. The Superintendent was there to host the Chairman-of-the-Board and CEO of GM. On the stage were the soon-to-be-revealed 1973 Corvette Stingray coupe and convertible models. GM reps were there to hand out free ‘promise rings’, to answer questions, and to take orders for the Class of 1974. Class of ‘73 already had their 1972 model ‘Vettes.

“Listen up men,” barked the cadet wing commander. “GM’s offering a free roll bar for all two-degrees ordering a ‘Vette convertible.” That drew a surge of traffic to the tables. “Gotta order today, though,” he added.

The Commandant and Dean both nodded with approval.

Thirty-Eight All Stars was in deep kimchee though. They had lost a bunch of their cadets, many star athletes, due to a curious ‘ethics’ investigation that was kept out of the papers but resulted in abysmal performance in intramurals last year.

Bull Six and Eight Ball Eight were in pretty good shape. For now, at least.

Unbeknownst to the Class of Seventy-Five marching up the Bring Me Men Ramp to their new third-degree squadrons, there would be a scandal just a few short weeks away.

The exposure would constitute a ‘near-miss’ for the exemplary student-athletes in Seegram Seven. The schematics and blueprints of Vandenberg Hall would reveal the truth in

crystal-clear perspective for the illustrious Board of Visitors.



“Come to order, come to order please, gentlemen,” said the Deputy Commandant’s executive officer. “. . . and lady,” he added nodding respectfully at Miss Penelope, the ever-present and iconic mother-of-all-cadets and home-away-from-home for the lucky two-dozen who had her as a cadet sponsor.

We have a highly classified investigation that will proceed now under the authority of the Commandant of Cadets and this month’s sponsor of the Parents Weekend Home Game – USAA.

He lowered his voice an octave and read from the script.

“If anyone is looking for a good deal on auto or homeowner’s insurance, give USAA a call. They’ll bundle your insurance coverage and save you at least fifty-bucks a month.”

Four cadets on ‘detention’ and awaiting ‘Show Cause’ boards with the Superintendent passed out flyers with the toll-free number for USAA.

“They’re just outside the south gate by the Zuider Zee,” whispered the Deputy Commandant sitting at the head of the mahogany conference table. He was a holdover from the Robin Olds administration and a ‘good guy’. He would be getting orders within the next few weeks as soon as a decent operational assignment could be finagled.

The administrivia was complete and the Exec clicked his heels and looked directly at the Deputy Comm.

“Thank you Captain,” the full bird responded as he took

over the meeting. “I want to thank Miss Penelope for sitting in as a voting member. This is a serious case that requires objectivity.”

The meeting droned on as witness after witness recounted the events of two nights before. The event in question had occurred very late, or should I say, very early the next morning. Any collusion between the perpetrator of the injustice and the Honor Investigation Team patrols or the OIC on his final inspection was ruled out.

The facts stand for themselves.

Between zero-one-fifteen and zero-one-thirty the cadet wing morality officer snuck into the closet of an underclassman completely undetected. The underclassman was in a one-man room (no roommate) and was assigned to cadet squadron eight. The morality officer had a six-pack of diet Tab and a box of Vanilla Wafers to sustain him during the night watch.

At zero-two-ten he heard a scratching on the door. At zero-two-eleven he projected his voice (like a ventriloquist) against the east-facing plate-glass window. The ‘scratcher’ at the door heard what could only be described as a ‘bedroom whisper’ that sounded like “C’mon in big boy.”

At zero-two-twelve it was all over and the perp was caught in the very act.

The ‘scratcher’, dressed like Batman with a too-small top and one-size-too-small leotards tiptoed into the completely dark room. The intended victim was observing everything with one eye open and pretending to be asleep. He had been granted a priori dispensation from the wing honor and ethics board from any and all honor and ethics violations if ‘Batman’s’ ACLU attorney filed a countersuit of entrapment or ‘intending to deceive’ the defendant.

In a moment, the foam ceiling tiles collapsed, and the

halogen lights were switched to full bright. The intended victim closed both eyes from the blinding light. Cadets recruited from the gymnastics team rappelled from the support rafters in the ceiling. Rescuers were dressed in cadet A-jackets, fatigue pants bloused, combat boots, and black socks.

The seemingly absentee OIC and Cadet-in-Charge were hiding with the Command Post staff in the room across the alcove from the intended victim's. The Honor Investigation Teams that were trolling after midnight were just a shout away and hiding in the two rooms adjacent to the victim's. They had been quiet as church mice, but now the trap was sprung.

"Alright, alright, settle down people," said the Deputy Commandant. "We're going to handle this like professionals."

He paused, scanned the crowd, and nodded an apology to Miss Penelope.

"And let me state for the record, I want zip-locked mouths on this, and no jokes about 'eight' or 'gay eight'."

Heads turned to the side and smirked. A few muted whispers to their neighbors.

Then all eyes snapped forward, padlocked on the Deputy Comm seated at the head of the conference table.



Clump, clump, clump. "Detail halt."

The contingent of three-degrees being assigned to Seegram Seven drew to a halt just short of the pinnacle of the ramp.

*Dang fine-looking bunch of athletes,* the squadron commander thought.

From his vantage point from the sixth-floor window in Fairchild Hall, Monty Post saw the fruits of his labors unfold.

“Pssst,” the soon to be assimilated new Seegram three-smoke whispered out the side of his mouth. His lips were pursed away from the direction of the Seegram Seven cadet squadron commander. *They are still dangerous, can still fry our assets*, he thought. “Pssst,” he whispered again to the unknown classmate to his left. “Whatcha got?” he whispered. “. . . football, track, b-ball?”

“Th-nickerball,” the soon-to-be new third-class squadron mate whispered back.

Just then the outdoor speakers began crackling. It was pretty easy to figure out what time of day it was by listening to the Command Post broadcast reveille, retreat, and taps.

Monty Post watched his hand-picked contingent of third-degrees assimilate into the ranks of Seegram Seven. The clandestine whispering had stopped – for now.

Monty’s subterfuge was simple and well-executed.

Monty lowered his Bushnell Insta Focus binocs’ and closed his eyes. *Mmmmm*, he thought. “Not tooo fine,” he whispered.

Monty himself had ‘infiltrated’ Churchill, the new top secret system that was demonstrated to the Director of Admissions and staff, but was deferred in favor of more ‘cloak and dagger’ tactics - AOCs surreptitiously skulking into the squadrons disguised as pizza delivery drivers from Giuseppe’s Central and Coke machine reloaders from the Coca-Cola bottling plant on North Nevada Avenue.

Monty had smuggled an IBM drum storage unit into the Cadet Home Brew Computer Club. The Norge frost-free unit was custom designed by the Department of Chemistry and Leadership and the Department of Electrical Engineering and

Leadership. The cylindrical read-write mechanism generated more than 24,000 BTUs. The cadets designed a fully functioning beer delivery system that provided refrigeration for the beer and cooling for the drum storage system nestled inside.

The fridge had been wheeled up the ramp between Mitchell and Fairchild Halls. The ADVON team consisting of Black Hat cadets and Second BCT Assault Course cadre fanned out as the fridge was rolled into the massive O'Keefe Elevator in Fairchild.

Several waiters from Mitches snuffed out their butts and ducked back into the receiving area. They knew something was up but did not want to get blamed for anything.

The svelte cashier, just another Donna from the cadet candy store in Fairchild Hall near the Lectorans and the Life Sciences Auditoriums, made haste to get into her puke green Ford Pinto and get 'outa there.

The Seegram Seven janitor, now dressed as a Distinguished Visiting Professor in full tweed, rendered the Norge 'point man' a thumbs-up to signal that the coast was clear.

The fridge with the beer keg-cooled IBM drum storage device moved without molestation down the corridor and into the Computer Club room adjacent to the Billy Boroughs enclave. The Billy Boroughs suite protected with the new Halon fire extinguishers. The Burroughs enclave that played host to more than 50 million IBM punch cards.

Monty's daydream ended and he looked down at his Accutron Marine Star Tachymeter with the resistors, diodes and gears showing beneath the glass. *They sell these now in the C-Store*, he reminded himself. The sweep second hand was approaching the top. He elevated the binoculars and saw the white-gloved hand in the command post lower the 'needle' onto the platter

spinning on the beat-up Garrard turntable. The loudspeakers crackled.

Da da ta ta ta, da Da ta ta ta, da ta ta ta ta da da daaaaa.

Retreat was sounding and all whispering and grab-aft was momentarily suspended out of deep respect for the flag and all that it stood for.

The basic cadets cum cadets-fourth class had already barked out the entrées, side dishes, beverages, and dessert options prior to the evening meal formation. We all knew the taste of the Mitchell Hall mystery meat, mashed potatoes, greenie beanies, orange beverage, apple pandowdy, all blessed by the Senior Protestant Chaplain.

Most of the cadet wing had checked mail before the evening meal, some tore up Dear John letters, some turned to the side to re-read the letter from home. The lucky ones, especially the doolies, received a kaboodle box from a thoughtful mother or grandmother.

Only one thing remained. The assimilation of the new third-class cadets into their respective new squadrons. Then the long march to Mitchell Hall and the process of finding one's table, checking the Staff Tower for 'bogeys', and placing drink orders with the doolies manning the ice bucket and lemonade pitchers at the end of the table.

The firstie from California always wanted 'no ice', and the new two-degree from Palo Alto wanted a 'creamsickle'. Half orange beverage (not orange juice) and half chilled milk.

In a desperate attempt to sit at rest for the evening meal, the three smacks at the next table began a well-orchestrated skit. The doolie sitting at the end of the table (directly across from the table commandant) began working a 'tickle' in his throat



into a .05Hz cough, then a deeper hack that brought up a little phlegm. His two classmates (left and right) popped to their feet, lifted him out of his chair and began a series of backslaps that drew the attention of the OIC and Cadet SOD on the Staff Tower.

The OIC and SOD stepped to the left of the flag to block the view of the few distinguished guests now behind them on the tower.

Back at the table where the doolie was choking to death, the victim reeled under the pre-rehearsed backslaps being administered by his classmates. He turned his back momentarily to the unconvinced table commandant, then reeled back to face him front-on. One classmate spun to his rear and lifted him from the ground in preparation for the Heimlich maneuver. The other classmate reeled back and delivered a right hook to the victim's solar plexus.

The projectile that was ejected from the mouth of the victim had the appearance of a turd. In reality, it was a moist ball of beef pemmican that had been left over from Second BCT.

The table commandant had seen this one before and the meatball was easily deflected to another table with the assistance of a metal serving tray.

With an almost imperceptible nod by the table commandant, the second-class cadets commanded the doolies to 'sit at rest' for the evening meal.

Then it began.

"Smacks, disregard what you hear."

"Sir, yes sir."

The table commandant looked around at the upper classmen and new three-degrees.

"Welcome to Seegram Seven men."

They all looked around at each other and nodded.

“We’ve got a lot to do to secure the Malanaphy trophy again this year. Everything is on-track as far as we can tell. We have a few secret weapons returning again this year.” He looked around suspiciously before continuing.

“We have the WWII janitor returning again. We have a mole in the contracting office, and he made sure the by-name-request was made part of the task order.”

“We also have the ‘ghost’ in Fairchild Hall keeping the trains on the tracks. If you ever hear the name ‘Monty Post’, or if you see an Australian exchange officer, or a DVP dressed in tweed, or a guy you have never seen before in the Comp Sci and Leadership Department – that’s him. Don’t say anything, just nod or wink politely.”

The doolies began passing the plates around. The hot seat shoveled the meat, potatoes, beans, and gravy. Then he passed the plate to the second baseman who inspected it and applied the garnish the way he was taught by Miss Penelope over at Arnold Hall. All doolies took dance lessons, napkin-folding lessons, and ‘plating skills training’ under the grave hand of Miss ‘P’. As the chives, rosemary, cayenne powder, sea salt, and turmeric were carefully applied, the third baseman wearing two white gloves received the plate with the right hand, announced the dish for its intended recipient, and passed the plate after transferring it to his left-gloved hand.

“Medallions of beef au jus, with cauliflower, haricot verts, and a dusting of saffron for cadet first class Bartholomew T. Graves from Sandusky, Ohio – please sir!”

A nouveau two-degree jotted down a few riki-tik entries in his Air Academy Federal Credit Union note-taker. Each note-taker was a half-inch, spiral-bound, two-by-three-inch pad with a Jack Daniels Parker T-Ball jotter, like the ones that the

distilleries and breweries hand out at the USAFA Community Center Class-6 store and combination gas station.

The reason for the notes were simple. In a few weeks, the two-degrees would hand all fourth-class training responsibilities to the new three-degrees. Right now, only the two-degrees could ‘train’. The ceremony would be short and sweet but would take place in the squadron TV room after it was converted to a prehistoric cave, like the picture on the Grand Funk Railroad album. Mark Farner and band all decked out in prehistoric garb, bear skins and all. The Seegram Seven banner sporting the slogan “We will train you” would be passed from ’74 to ’75.

And that would be about all.

Since the mass migration from Lowery Air Force Base in 1957, the spirit of training always came in a distant second to the spirit of intramurals for Seegram Seven. The recruited athletes even adopted clever disguises that allowed them to participate in intramurals undetected. The varsity quarterback cum basketball star could nail the Flickerball goal from the fifty-yard line. The recruited Rugby All American could mow down a defensive line in Lacrosse. The varsity Soccer players could ‘place’ first through fifth in the intramural cross-country races, allowing the rest of Seegram’s top runners to fill in the middle.

Cadets passing each other in the hall would offer a mock salute or just a wave with the tired phrase “We will train you.”

“Yep, we will train you.”

“Yup, we will train you.”

But to really get the blood pumping in Seegram Seven switch from training to athletics. That was something to behold.

The sparse notes that the two-degree was writing down were nothing more than just good advice for one of the few OJT ‘we will train you’ training sessions with the new three-degrees.

Once completed, the two-degrees could pass the mantle of fourth-class training down to the third-class.

The lessons scribbled in the note taker looked like this:

#1. Graves. Learning objective: on active duty, officers named 'Graves' will be assigned the call sign 'Digger'. Note: the same goes for 'Wells'. Officers named Graves or Wells will be assigned the call sign 'Digger'. Lagniappe: you never get to pick your own call sign. Others do that for you. Anyone with the last name 'Graves' will eventually pick up the call sign 'Digger Graves'. Anyone with the last name 'Wells' will eventually be dubbed 'Digger Wells'.

The final entry was 'WWTY' in block letters, crossed out, then re-written in cursive.

#2. Automobile decorum.

(This eventually was nominated for a Best of 1973 in the soon-to-be-published *Seegram Sewage* squadron newspaper.)

When borrowing a member of the Class of '73's Corvette, there are agreed-upon standards to adhere to. First, find out where they parked the 'Vette in the firstie parking lot at the base of the Bring Me Men Ramp or in the firstie parking lot north of the parade field. Next, drive the 'Vette to the Diamond Shamrock gas station outside the south gate. There is a very good chance that your patrón slid through the gate on fumes last Sunday afternoon with no time or money to refuel, and with minutes to spare at the sign-in log. The CCQ would be bound to confirm the exact sign-in time (to the second) using the Newgate wall clock that had been 'hacked' at shift change and was 'synched' to the time being broadcast by the U.S. Naval Observatory atomic Master Clock at the Vice President's house in Washington D.C.

Once minimally refueled, use the time available to pick up chicks downtown at Palmer High School or at Wasson High

School. If you pick up **two** chicks (easy to do), have the hotter of the two sit on the ‘hump’. The ‘hump’ on a ‘Vette is the center console that is home to the parking brake handle. This will place the more attractive of the females in close proximity to you for more detailed inspection. Apologize profusely for not driving one of the few Pontiac GTOs or Mustang Mach I cars in the firstie parking lot. This will communicate thoughtfulness and empathy. At the same time your apology is a test for the more attractive female to demonstrate a ‘good attitude’ and a preference for close physical contact over comfort. During the evening, if the hot one leans toward you to look at the tachometer or feigns losing her balance in a sharp turn and falls against your shoulder or touches your right leg, you have an opportunity to advance the relationship with another query.

“You must be uncomfortable Sheila,” you say at a stop sign. “Would you like to swap ‘seats’ with Angela for a while?”

Although your question may upset Angela who has been riding comfortably in the passenger seat, the risk is worth value of the data that you will collect. The multiple hypothesis testing that you are advancing for your Behavioral Sciences and Leadership 340 upper division paper for ‘Marriage and Family’ is clear:

- a. If the hot chick ‘Sheila’ says “No, that’s okay,” you can attribute that to a good attitude **and** a preference for ‘high-touch’ over ‘high comfort’;
- b. If the hot chick ‘Sheila’ says “No, that’s okay,” and initiates physical contact (hand on your shoulder or hand on your right thigh) then you need to make plans to get rid of the other chick (Angela) as quickly as possible,
- c. The optimal method for cargo transfer is to have a squadron buddy (‘wingman’) in extended trail with a

current or one-year earlier model Corvette. Use Tactical Air Command (TAC) hand signals to request a stop at the Big Train parking lot if uptown, or a tactical rejoin (street-side) on the corner between Giuseppe's Central and the Cotton Club downtown.

- d. Double-blind studies have confirmed that there is a 23% probability that the offer to switch seats may incite the tendencies of Angela to 'compete' for her turn riding the 'hump'. Should this occur, request your wingman close into to close-trail formation in the event that an emergency cargo transfer is warranted.

Side note: in the unlikely event that you are transporting three babes in the 'Vette, your first priority is to get names and phone numbers for the follow-up phase. Be sure to keep these as 'top-tier' candidates with the svelte frames that allow three to share the incredibly compact passenger compartment of a '72 'Vette.

No sooner did the two-degree complete the final entry in his pocket note-taker than the OIC announced from the staff tower that the smoking lamp was 'lit'.

"Okay men, see you back at the squad," the table commandant barked after taking the last drag on his cigarette and snuffed it out in a half-filled coffee cup.

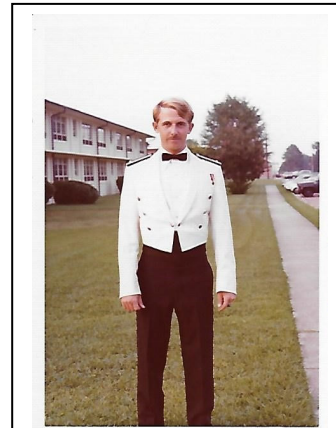
The two-degree closed up his note-taker and slid the T-Ball jotter back into the spiral rings.



Before we go back to Seegram Seven, let's address the nature

and intent of the strange man in tweed that was not only observing the poetry-in-motion but also pulling a few of the puppet strings. Monty Post was indeed a graduate and a former active duty officer fighting the good fight in 'Nam.

Some will say that he was either a 'shadow' of Robin Olds at West Point, Olds' P-38 wingman in WWII, or a Kamp USAFA grad and Olds' wingman in 'Nam. The rumor that the enigmatic Post was also seen disguised as a Distinguished Visiting Professor (DVP), a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) commander, or a janitor that had served at Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack were



NSA Surveillance c1966  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Montgomery Post

completely unfounded. He was simply not old enough for those.

On the matter regarding the 'Man-in-Tweed's' hijacking the Churchill technology that was presented to the Director of Admissions and her staff (but not adopted), let the facts speak for themselves.

A single IBM punch card did the trick. The distraction was caused by the janitor in coveralls who tripped the cadet carrying a three-foot tray of cards that were destined for the feed-tray of the massive Burroughs B5000. The apologetic custodian caught the sophomore lest he dash his foot against a stone, but allowed the full deck of cards to cascade in slow motion onto the impeccably polished floor.

Classmates rushed to the cadet's aid and scrambled to scoop up every card without bending, folding, or mutilating a single one. After the fall, it would take the student more than three

hours to carefully assemble the deck in a way that would allow the program to run true blue with nary a syntax error.

Many saw, but none paid any real attention to the tweedy character who entered then exited the control room buzzing with America's finest driving hard to complete their end-of-term projects.

Exactly where the card was inserted, no one could tell. The investigators began dusting the second-floor faculty lounge and distinguished visiting professor's locked office for prints. The assumption was that the Carnegie Mellon DVP may have pulled a high-tech practical joke on his colleagues that he counted as 'knuckle-draggers'.

The esteemed professor, it was determined, was on stage at a national high-speed computing conference at the exact moment that the teletype machine began generating the verboten data.





## 2 THE END OF ZI

MONTY POST (the ‘ghost’ of Fairchild Hall) had long ago unpacked his Garrard turntable and collection of the new 33 RPM LPs the day before his fall semester began. The swanky bossa nova albums by Sergio Mendes and Brazil ’66, cool jazz by Wayne Shorter, and the new beat by Otis Redding. The rest, more than 200 titles in all were a mix of Sinatra and Count Basie, Little Stevie Wonder, and the new LP by Le Grand Orchestre de Paul Mauriat. He picked that one up on summer leave near Florennes Air Base in French-speaking Belgium. Monty’s dad was rumored to be a U.S. ambassador or something and his mother a member of an obscure royal family dating back to the eleven-hundreds. The enigmatic Monty Post’s former ‘bachelor pad’ was home base to quite a few ‘salons’ or co-ed mixers. That was before he was summoned for an appointment to Kamp USAFA by the President. Before he was sent on a top-secret mission to ‘save the day’ for Dwight D. Eisenhower’s legacy.

That was then. Fast forward now to the end of summer session 1972.

In the present day the Class of ’72 was gone. The highest-ranking former cadets drove their Chevy Corvettes to Williams Air Force Base in Chandler, Arizona. The Governor had

already requested the Army National Guard to provide security for the freshman females at Arizona State University and the University of Arizona.

Other new graduates fanned out across the southern states to complete Undergraduate Pilot Training.



Others to Undergraduate Navigator Training in California, or to accept the mantle of responsibility as a Loggie, Communications, or Support Squadron Commander.

The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) at the end of Seegram Seven had a panoramic view of the cadet parade ground. The firsties in the Class of '73 made sure that the halls of the DMZ **still** lit up with the buzz-saw guitar of Joe Walsh and The James Gang singing *Walk Away*. And the acoustic guitar of Don McLean's *American Pie* wafting westward to the CCQ desk. And that the needle **still** came down on *Brown Sugar* (side one) and *Bitch* (side two) from last summer's 'Stones LP (*Sticky Fingers*).

The entire Class of '74 was in the Squadron Assembly Room on the terrazzo level to meet with the active duty brother of a Seegram Seven firstie. The brother has just flown his Aardvark in for the first weekend of the semester and to chase a few of

the skirts-in-residence at Cragmore College.



Seems as though the wing king at Nellis Air Force Base was interested in ‘giving back’ to the next generation of America’s future leaders. The squadron exchange and visit to the ‘Home of the Fighter Pilot’ would occur next spring. The brother was here to capture the ‘greatest hits’ from the Class of ‘74 Zone of the Interior or ‘ZI’ trips that had just concluded.

What became quickly apparent to all was that the ‘good’ trips were not the Stateside ZI trips completed by the new two-degrees. The really good summer trips were the prototype Third Lieutenant trips overseas, just completed by the new firsties in the Class of ’73. One guy in Seegram even went to Da Nang and got a ride in a two-seater F-105 Thunderchief. Just like the ‘Iron Butterfly’ on the terrazzo.

To justify the risk and expense of OCONUS travel for cadets, the Commandant of Cadets conferred with the Department Head of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership.

“Let’s meet at the ‘Bridgers’, at the ‘O’ Club. I don’t want the Math or Poly Sci Department Heads accusing us of collusion.”

“Nuf said, General. I’ll see you there at fifteen-thirty. Won’t matter if we’re overheard there. Non-attribution for the

Bridgers and all.”

“By the way,” the Commandant added, “we’re adopting the new standard from West Point.”

“The early warning system? Heel taps for the AOCs?”

“Yup,” said the Comm, “getting classified reports that the AOCs are sneaking into the squadrons after duty hours and sometimes on weekends.”

“Churchill?” the Permanent Professor added.

“Correct sir! Churchill, and I think that the ‘ghost’ is at the bottom of this. My assets in Fairchild Hall reported that they almost caught him after he slid the IBM punch-card into the deck that flummoxed Billy Burroughs. Said that he breezed through the glass door separating the Burroughs enclave from the pressure seal that the fire department uses when they trigger the Halon fire extinguishers. Said that he ‘faked’ that he was triggering the Halon with a room full of cadets working to beat the clock on their final projects. Said that by the time they took off their HAZMAT suits the subject had completely disappeared. All they found was a forged suicide note.”

“Dang,” the Department Head added gazing down at his Corfam shoes.

The die was cast. The two would share a few drinks in the bunker and agree that the new ‘Third Lieutenant’ implementation would be the next official summer program. And yes, it would include overseas travel to U.S. and NATO military installations under the watchful eye of the Air Force Director of Safety at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Royal Air Force took the first to step forward to invite cadets to the international safety festival in Edinburg, Scotland. The origins of this ‘safety congress’ dated back to the time of the building of Hadrian’s Wall.

The Spanish Air Force was next with an invitation for the Spanish- and French-speaking cadets to arrive in Pamplona on July 6th to emcee the kickoff of the running of the bulls.

In a show of goodwill, His Excellency Francisco Franco arranged for visiting cadets to travel to Paris for the finish of the Tour de France in an Army-surplus Heinkel He 111 bomber left behind after the Spanish Civil War.

With the cooperation of the U.S. Air Attaché at the American Embassy in Paris and the Commandant of l'École de l'Air, the hand-picked cadets would be cleared hot for l'entrance grand by touching down on l'Avenue des Champs-Élysées in the army surplus WWII German Bomber to co-host the kickoff of the Bastille Day celebration on July 14th.

“Make sure that some of the Falcon Soccer Team and Cadet Road Bike Club members get seats on that Heinkel,” added the Commandant as he finished up the telecon with the Director of Safety at Kirtland. “Yup, I’ll make sure that you get copies of the after-action reports, no biggie. Okay, see you at the Navy game.”

So that was that. The ZI program would be replaced by the new ‘Third Looie’ program that would include visits to U.S. and NATO military installations ‘across the pond’.

Yes, there would be a few incidents and indiscretions that would be ignored or swept under the carpet. And yes, there would be a few hysterical mothers and daughters who would appeal to the NATO installation commanders for information about the handsome Americanos.



“Three degrees, get your assets into the TV room,” hollered the AOC from his office. The CCQ sitting outside was the only three-smoke guaranteed to hear the officer’s direct verbal order.

*Whaaaat?* He thought to himself. *Better get the smacks to call minutes on that one.*

“Nixon,” get your roommates and alcove mates out here most riki-tik,” the CCQ barked at the first doolie he saw. *Line of sight scheduling (chuckle, chuckle).*

“Sir, yes sir!” he responded.

Within a minute there were eight smacks standing at attention in front of the CCQ desk.

“Men, start calling minutes for the Class of ’75 to report to the TV room ASAP.”

“Sir, yes sir!” they responded in unison and with ‘balls’ in their voices.

*These men are well trained,* thought the CCQ checking his Hamilton electric wristwatch from the C-Store. *Gotta pick off Newbeck before he reports to the TV room. He’s replacing me as CCQ and needs to march to dinner at Mitches before shift-change. Don’t even know what he looks like. Don’t even know what sport he excels at. Correction, sports.*

“Nixon,” hollered the CCQ.

“Sir, yes sir,” responded Nixon after his first minute summoning the three-smokes to the TV room.

“Go get Cadet Third Class Newbeck.”

“Yes sir,” answered Nixon who turned on a heel and trotted toward the DMZ.

*Good man that Nixon,* thought the CCQ.

The CCQ looked at his watch nervously as his disheveled classmates emerged from their rooms with a questioning look on their faces.

*Holy frijoles,* thought the CCQ. *Here comes Nixon with a three-*

*degree in service alpha. Good man. Okay, so that's what Newbeck looks like. One down, twenty-nine to go. Make that twenty-eight, I already know Doggerty from Dirty Thirty.*

"Hey Newbeck," said the CCQ ignoring Nixon, "you get dinner early at Mitches. Before shift change."

"Oh, okay," said Newbeck. "Is there a playbook or something for this CCQ duty?"

"Not really, it's all OJT."

Newbeck paused thoughtfully and looked up and down the hall.

"Okay, thanks," said Newbeck. "I'll scoot up to command post before the major comes out. Heard he's a sneaky little bugger," he whispered.

"I'll be here when you get back, I'll tell you what I know," said the CCQ.

"Adios," said Newbeck as he boarded the 'vator for the short ride to the terrazzo.



*Click, click, click . . . Click, click, click . . . click, click, click, click . .*

The AOC paced back and forth nervously on the polished tile floor of the Seegram Seven TV room. Two wide-eyed brand new three-smokes were tracking his motion from the front row like a pair of BMEWS early warning radar antennae.

The AOC, a major in the USAF wore the wings of an Air Force navigator.

*Not bad, thought the one named Fogarty. May get a few war stories out of this one before he gets sent back to southeast Asia.*

The chatter in the hallway became a rumble as the remaining twenty-five new arrivals jostled past the CCQ desk, moving three of the 'Jetson' chairs around in their path. The worn-away chair leg pads screeched on the buffed tile in the hallway.

They filed into the TV room and collapsed into the squishy Naugahyde sofas and worn out cloth-covered arm chairs from the Salvation Army.

The AOC hacked nervously and began.

"A-aaaah, welcome men," he paused. "The CCQs are the only ones absent?" That was a question.

None responded for fear of being brought up on an HV due to pure ignorance. The fact of the matter was that the only three-degrees in Seegram Seven that knew another classmate were the pairs that had migrated from Dirty Thirty and Double Deuce. Most considered that an anomaly. The reality was that the matriculation to Seegram Seven was carefully orchestrated by Monty Post known only as the 'man in tweed', or the 'ghost', or the 'janitor', or the 'DVP', or the 'Aussie exchange officer', or the 'enigma'.

Sweeney and Doggerty from Dirty Thirty, and Grillo and Lapinski from Double Deuce. *One of these four would surely rise to the level of Alpha-dog for the new arrivals to Seegram.* Sure, the random guys that knew each other from Math, Chemistry, English Lit, and French class. And yes, the outgoing CCQ just 'made' Newbeck, the incoming CCQ thanks to the resourcefulness of C4C Nixon who found him most riki-tik. Yup there was a name tag for Boyle, Fogarty, and Doggerty near the CCQ desk. *Must be a three-man room.*

"A-aaaah, you can call me 'Major Alex B. Sneddekker' when you report to me in a military manner," he paused, "my call sign is 'Snedd'. With two d's."

The three-degrees looked nervously from left to right.



*Are we supposed to call him 'Snedd'? they were thinking.*

“A-aaaah, welcome to Seegram Seven, men.”

This was the major's first detail as an AOC. He was actually welcoming himself to Seegram Seven. Turns out he was a ROTC grad from Champaign Urbana. Majored in double-e. Had 20-40 vision by the time he graduated, so he got a billet for navigator training and went to Sacramento. Married a 'townie' and moved to Castle Air Force Base with new bride in tow for KC-135 training before shipping off to Vietnam. Wife stayed behind with a 'bun in the oven'. Got debriefed at Castle and sent to squadron officer school in Alabama. Went back to the RTU at Castle for a short-tour as an instructor. Two kids now, boy and a girl, and living in Douglass Valley in officer's housing.

*Hmmmmmm, thought Grillo, one of the pair from CS-22. There's something that he's not telling us.*

Grillo was correct, but the sin was one of omission. In future episodes like this, his classmates would observe Grillo pursing his lips to the side and directing a simple "bullshit". The expletive would be directed to a classmate on the left or on the right. Never to the officer or NCO speaking.

In addition to his legerdemain in tennis, racket ball, squash racquets, badminton, and ping-pong, Grillo had the uncanny ability to project his voice in any direction and at any volume.

As the major kept talking, the anonymous observer would have seen Grillo's lips purse to the side no less than twelve times. Each time, the first syllable 'b' would be tee'd up but never uttered. The silence was not out of Grillo's fear of detection. Rather, Grillo's subconscious registered a tone in the AOC's voice that suggested that the major was not intentionally hiding anything.

In time, the major would reveal that he was an alternate for the '68 Olympiad in Mexico City while the Class of '75 was still

in high school or on active duty as airmen. The sport? Sports? Swimming. Swimming in freestyle, butterfly, breast stroke, and relay for the Olympics. Water polo too back in school. He was also recruited for the dive team at Norwich University in Vermont. Ironically, he passed on Norwich because he wanted to avoid ending up in Vietnam as a grunt. In his youth he held a strong desire to wreak havoc on 'Charlie Kong' from the air. In a way his dreams would come true.

As the AOC droned on and on, the outgoing CCQ made his final rounds. Newbeck, the incoming CCQ was taking an early evening meal at Mitchell Hall with the command post staff. The fare was tube steaks, grilled cauliflower, peas, brown pudding, a peculiar 'berry' drink, coffee, tea, and the smoking lamp for dessert. The waiter assured the table commandant that there was 'no more water in Mitchell Hall'.

The four-degrees were hiding in their rooms. The two-smokes were in the squadron assembly room. The seniors were in the firstie parking lots scraping bugs of their '72 Corvette windshields and putting a final coat of Turtle Wax on their lethal-looking POVs before the first day of classes for the fall semester - tomorrow.

There was nobody in the squad to observe the hapless janitor who was eavesdropping on the activity in the TV room. He was dressed as a simple working man. Carhartt coveralls over a shop-worn Pendleton and steel-toed shoes. He pushed his dust mop without making a sound across the diamond-buffed tile floor. He occasionally dipped to polish-away a scuffed heel mark with a cloth that emerged from his pocket and was just as quickly replaced. In time all would know that 'Henry' was a WWII veteran that had seen some action in the Pacific. For the moment, no one would ever suspect that this was the 'ghost' of Fairchild Hall. Monty Post in the flesh.

### 3 AFTER ACTION

WHEN EVOKING the spirit of times past, cadets would refer to the 'brown shoe days' of Lowry Air Force Base and the Class of '59.

These were modern times indeed, but at times the fledgling Kamp USAFA needed a zeitgeist to draw upon that would evoke the spirit of the 'long ago and far away'. Kind of like the new Mud Slide Slim song by James Taylor that the cadet radio station would play most afternoons. For now they were still trying to catch the essence of West Point whose fields of friendly strife expanded to the Civil War. And Navy, whose heritage went back to John Paul Jones. Not the Led Zeppelin bassist. The naval hero.

As the AOC continued, the janitor quietly listened to the dispensation of wisdom to the new third-class.

*Not bad, he thought to himself. He's covered his introduction, he told them what he was going to tell them, then he told them, then he told them what he told them.*

Very unwisely, the AOC had violated OPSEC 101.

*Hmmmm, what's this?* the janitor thought. *Looks like Major Alex B. Sneddeker left the roster of incoming three-smokes face-up on his*

*desk.* The janitor craned his neck to see if the list was complete without actually stepping over the threshold of the AOC's open door. *That's strike two, Snedd (chuckle, chuckle).*

The meeting was just getting started so the janitor knew that he had at least five minutes without interruption. No potential disruption by a distinguished visitor, a phone call coming into the CCQ desk, a no-notice walk-through by the group AOC, stuff like that.

*Letssss see,* he thought, tip-toeing over the threshold. *Looks like a fine crop of student-athletes. Yess, yess, yess.* He bent over at the waist to read the roster without touching anything on Sneddekker's desk.

*The computer subroutine had run perfectly,* he thought. Sweeney and Daggerty both from Dirty Thirty, and Grillo and Lapinski from Double Deuce. Newbeck from Fighting Fourth. Boyle and Fogarty also from First Group. McSchwartz, O'Bannon, Nasturtium, Kalalabad, Stardust, Spiggott, Zawicki, Speedwagon, Gahenna, Weirnam, Charles d'Vine, Smurtsburgher, Poe IV, Cognos, François, Young, Zugspitze, and Bartholomew X. Taylor (from Paso Robles, California) had also migrated from the New Dorm. Winnebago-Superbus transferred in from Rebeleven. Lucchese, Niblick, and Neugaarten hailed from the third-group squadrons in Vandenberg Hall.

*Okay . . . direct hit,* thought the janitor as he gently rose to his full height and tip-toed out of the AOC's office. *None the wiser.*

The cadet radio station just a few hundred feet west of the AOC's office was broadcasting live now, with a single 8 ohm Acoustic Research speaker blasting into the inside hallway.

Last week, the cadet first-class DJ had unpacked the new Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young double-album 4 Way Street.

Here and now, the needle was down on *Southern Man*. The janitor still poised outside the TV room looked at his watch and winced. He knew what was coming.

The change of command right upstairs at the command post was only twelve and a half minutes away. The Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Cadet Colonel Bradley K. Leisure would direct the proceedings with his own pick-list of John Philip Sousa marches played by the Marine Corps Band. Cadet first-class Leisure was decked out in Marine Corps whites and had made the decision early-on that he would join the Corps after graduation. He was already learning about the Marines by sitting at the feet of the Green Onion, swagger stick and all.

Cadet Leisure was also ready. He had his own Honor Investigation Team – HIT squad – specially trained to cover his assets during these command post changes of command.

On the terrazzo were the 40 replacement CCQs, the Arnold Hall cadet NCOIC, the cadet Senior Officer of the Day (SOD), the cadet Senior NCOIC, and the cadet OIC that would supervise all late night inspections.

The cadet wing knew the drill.

Once the first note of the trumpet blast sounded the cadets in first group would vacate their rooms and make haste for the mail room, the barber shops, the C-Store, the gym, or the library. The DJ would vacate the sparse control room at KAFA radio station and lock the door behind him as the needle was touching down on the opening note of *Ohio*.

The Ampex and Sony tuners were set to the low-Watt radio station, the voice of American-style freedom in the Rockies. The amplifiers were set to max gain. The speakers had already been placed on the white-topped Ranch Oak design dressers, in front of open windows, and aimed in the direction of the command post.

At the sound of Neil Young's grinding guitar intro, C1C Leisure's blood began to boil. He smirked an evil grin knowing that the cat-and-mouse game was full-on. The rest of the wing did too.

Cadet Leisure's bumbling HIT squad emerged from the tunnels into Seegram Seven. Their intent was to execute the orders given to subvert the insubordination all across First Group. For their trouble, they began slip-sliding uncontrollably on the thin layer of Crisco shortening that had been carefully squeegeed onto the spit-shined twelve-by-twelve-inch tiles. The janitor was nowhere to be seen.

With all of Leisure's HIT squad members emerging from the tunnels at the same location, the lessons of ancient battles came to mind. Three-hundred Spartans at Thermopylae were no match for the seven tubs of lard that immobilized Cadet Leisure's four and twenty henchmen (mostly Class of '74 two-degrees and a few talented zits in the Class of '75). None were denizens of Seegram Seven, which made it all the more imperative that the halls of Seven be totally vacated for the infamous 'degradation of Colonel Leisure'.

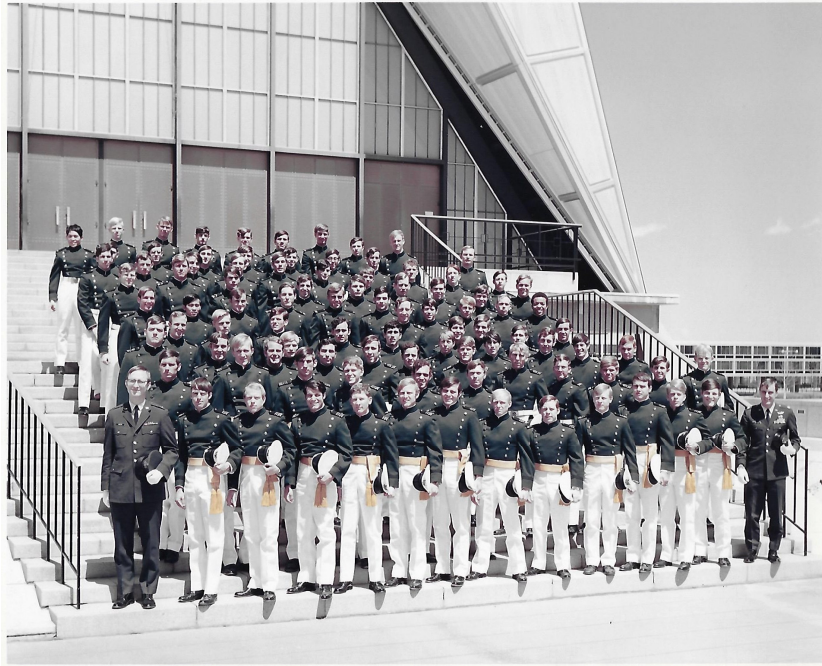
The Commandant of Cadets smiled wistfully as he observed the command post change of command from the elevated director's chair positioned strategically in the observation tower. The lone C1C Leisure could be observed barking commands for the HIT squad to 'regroup' into his Motorola 'brick'.

*That guy's certainly working himself into a lather,* he thought. The Comm had his own 'brick' in the charger tuned to the command post channel.

The Green Onion ground his molars slowly from his perch on his purebred Iberian warhorse that he billeted at the cadet riding stables in Pine Valley. He observed the act of defiance from start to finish through his 'Patrick Henry' Telescope while

holding the reigns in-place on the Harmon Hall courtyard. The elevated promontory gave the Marine Colonel full view of the battlefield below and his nemesis the Comm at his slightly more elevated position.

From his own elevated post, the Commandant shook his head as he reflected on the matter from his director's seat. He could see the Green Onion lifting his swagger stick to maintain balance in the saddle. The impeccable stallion was rearing back on his hooves as if to commence a frontal assault on the Cadet Chapel.



“Boy the Green Onion is pissed,” whispered the Comm to himself. *I hope he doesn't think about cutting down the Senior Protestant Chaplain or the 'god squad' recruits in their Yves St. Laurent skirts and blouses. They wouldn't stand a chance.*

The Comm's reference was of course to the Senior Protestant Chaplain's act of insubordination in supplanting the authority of the Green Onion, by securing the New Dorm

offices for the Chapel Staff numbering 35. The ‘Onion had planned to conduct his own clandestine operations from the elegant suites nestled in the westernmost ‘quad’ of the new dorm.

The ‘Onion had long-since fashioned himself a modern-day reincarnation of his Yale predecessor Nathan Hale.

He swore on his honor as a Marine that the ‘perps’ would pay dearly for this level of disrespect. That included the senior padre.

Later that evening, well after taps, he disciplined C1C Leisure for his dereliction of duty in letting the future Air Force flyboys best a future Marine commander.

Leisure was humbled and vowed to clear his name as he groveled for forgiveness under the harsh boot-heel of his mentor. In time Leisure’s contrition wafted upward as a sweet aroma into the nostrils of the omnipotent Green Onion. The Colonel lifted his boot from the neck of C1C Leisure and the contrite OIC crawled away on all fours to prepare the battlefield for the next Honor Investigation Team blitz.

For the Comm though, this keystone cops assault on the Honor Code had become a flagrant misuse of authority.

*This matter of ‘honor’ has strayed too far from the original intent of Ike and the founders, he thought. If we don’t watch it, the term ‘honor’ will be interpreted to mean the defending of one’s personal honor, personal convenience, and finally retaliation against any perception of embarrassment.*

And the Comm was right. These Honor Investigation Team banshee raids or ‘HIT squads’ were being launched with the most limited justification and at times to settle petty differences that would only warrant a sword fight or a duel on the parade field with flintlocks back at his alma mater – West Point.



*Hmmmmmm, the thought. We need another forum for settling these personal squabbles. This bears more study.*



Da da da da da, Da da da da da, Da da da da da, Da da daaaa.

“What the heck is that?” said the Seegram Seven AOC, still explaining the merits of the new Third Looie program to the new three-smokes. The Class of ‘75 in the TV Room.

The new CCQ, Cadet Third Class Newbeck, appeared in the doorway to the TV room.

“Newbarger, what in blazes is going on out there? Why is command post blowing revile?”

“Not sure sir. I just got a call from command post. The Commandant has ordered the entire cadet wing to the terrazzo. Squadron formation. Special announcement to make. That’s all I got, sir!”

“Thanks, Neustetter, have the doolies call minutes and I’ll call the Deputy Commandant’s secretary,” the AOC added. *Get*

*to the bottom of this I will.*

The rumble could be heard as the cadets of First Group stampeded through the halls. They were on their way back from the C-Store, the model airplane club, the cadet photography club, the barber shop, the ski club and other places. They were headed back to their rooms in a full gallop to get their hats, sabers, guidons. The doolies were returning to their closets to get their 'good' trousers for the formation. Each smack would exchange their 'scuffed' low-quarter shoes for the brilliantly spit-shined pair hidden in the laundry bin.

Then they would assemble on the terrazzo for an informal chewing-out by the Commandant. Something like that. No biggie really. The practice of yelling at cadets for doing things that you taught them to do was commonplace.

The command post OIC, Cadet Colonel Leisure hoped that the Comm would restrict the entire cadet wing for the weekend. Leisure would be disappointed – bitterly.

The Commandant's golf cart zipped between Orville and Wilbur Wright. The communications squadron commander was blowing the dust out of the new broadcast quality mike perched atop the new chrome and steel pedestal. Location? - in front of the Air Gardens at the mid-point of a forty-five degree angle connecting the top of the ramp and the pitot tube of the Iron Butterfly.

The Comm hopped out almost before the executive officer could bring the golf cart to a complete stop. His goal was to substitute his legitimate athleticism for something that he could not compete with – the swash and swagger of the now retired General Robin Olds.

He waved his way to the microphone and began addressing the cadet wing without fanfare.

“Men, I have good news,” he said.

“First, all HIT squads not sanctioned by me personally are hereby verboten, kaput, cancelled, and unauthorized.” He paused.

“Do you get me?” He paused before the microphone.

“We get you, sir!” the cadet wing responded in unison with ‘balls’ in their voice.

“Good . . . now . . . regarding the changes that I am implementing . . .” he paused . . .

“I want you to know . . .” he paused . . .

“I am hereby launching the ‘New Look’ initiative that I came up with and presented to the Super . . .” he paused, expecting wild applause but heard nothing.

“The first tenet of ‘New Look’ will take place immediately,” he paused.

“The first tenet is that all cadet-directed HIT squads will be replaced by the new Squadron Mandated Uniform Training court, under the direction of the cadet wing training officer.”

A roar was initiated in First Group and proceeded by-the-ripples until the entire valley shook.

The touri on the Chapel wall said “Terrific!”

The ‘god squad’ members turned on their high-heels and looked on in wonder.

The Harmon Hall staffers still at their desks gawked out the windows overlooking the terrazzo.

The secretaries sneaking out of work early to the parking lots stopped in their tracks and shivered.

The waiters in Mitchell Hall abandoned their work setting tables and applauded.

And a four ship of F-111s from a ‘gas-n-go’ at Nellis Air Force Base flew across the wing formation at .915 Mach passing over Mitches with the throttles set at 85%.

'Davit' lead looked down and thought *Hope they appreciate the 'whispering death' as much as Charlie does (chuckle, chuckle).*

So, the no-notice formation was the special announcement by the Commandant. The new SMUT trials would replace all cadet-initiated Honor Investigation Team strikes.

Tonight's 19:00 hours local formation at Arnold Hall would be a very special treat for all.



Da da da da da daaaa, da da da da da daaaaa, da da da da,  
Da da da da, da dada da da da da da daaaaaaaaaa.

On the final note of ruffles and Flourishes, the Commandant of Cadets jogged out onto the Arnold Hall stage and took the black mike from the wooden podium sporting the seal of Kamp USAFA.

He looked like he was going to tell another off-color joke, but then just looked out over the crowd and said "What a good lookin' bunch of baaaaad muthaaaaaas . . ." then he paused again ". . . I think you get the message." He smiled.

Grillo leaned over to me, pursed his lips in my direction and said "This musta been how he addressed the '105 jockeys in 'Nam."

"Sho 'nuf," I responded, not wanting to say too much while the 'big-boss-man' was on the stage addressing the cadet wing.

The doolies up in the balcony were invisible. The firsties were checkin' their Seikos that they picked up on the 'pilot

program' Third Looie visits to Tokyo, Singapore, Malaysia, Sydney, and the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

Last weekend Seegram Seven's C1C Medley T. Smithicker from Lacrosse, Wisconsin took his Hong Kong treasure to the new Citadel Mall to get a new battery in it and the owner smashed the crap out of his Rolex Oyster Perpetual Submariner watch using a ball-peen hammer. Owner said it was a 'knock off' and if the cadet put up a stink, the owner would report him to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

One guy in Stalag Seventeen brought back a Tiger's Head from his Third Looie trip to Kuala Lumpur and the Customs agents at Bradley Field in Connecticut confiscated it because it was an endangered species.

C1C Boris G. Lumshevak from Pittsburgh, PA tried to bring back two giant elephant tusks from his trip to the Belgian Congo. The C-130 Hercules was held up on the runway because the tribal chiefs who lost the tusks after 'rolling the bones' with Cadet 'Van' Lumshevak called the tower and told Air Traffic Control that the 'Herc's takeoff clearance was rescinded.

A firstie in Rebeleven said that he woke up at the BOQ in Rio de Janeiro with a wedding band on his finger. He packed his bags quickly, took a jitney to Galeão Air Force Base across town, and took a Space-A flight to Howard Air Force Base in Panama. When he got back, the AOC made him meet with the Senior Catholic Priest and an Assistant Professor of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership who was certified as a hypnotist. After seven hours of questioning, they let him go back to the squadron and reported that there was no evidence of an actual marriage or the 'intent' to deceive an official of the U.S. or Brazilian governments.

As I sat there next to Grillo, it dawned on me that this Kamp

USAFA seems to be a place where the most unbelievable stories are told with an absolute straight face. The rumor mill is operating at full-tilt and 24/7.

While in confession last week, I told the chaplain that I was concerned about repeating tales that were told to me by cadets in Seegram Seven or in my core courses.

He told me that it was not an HV if I was just repeating the story without ‘embellishing’ it. I looked that word up in the cadet dictionary when I got back to my room. Next, I looked up the location of the Belgian Congo in Africa in my cadet issue Aldean University Atlas.

The padre laid on an extra Our Father and Hail Mary as ‘insurance’ and told me not to worry about the wild rumors.

He did recommend a pilgrimage to Rome . . . if I could swing it on my upcoming Third Looie trip next summer. I told him that I would check it out, then I blessed myself, did penance, and high-tailed it to intramurals.

One thing I can say for sure though. It’s easy to keep a clean conscience with the adult supervision here at Kamp USAFA.

What with the AOC, Squadron Faculty Officer, cadet chaplains, Extra Instruction or EI from the faculty, the Squadron Training Officer, the cadet wing honor and ethics reps, Miss ‘P’ over at Arnold Hall, and the hot chick at the Fairchild Hall candy store there’s always someone to tell your troubles too.

I snapped out of it as Grillo was nudging me with his left elbow. The Green Onion was patrolling the aisle next to us and Grillo thought I was nodding off.

“So, men, are there any questions about next summer’s Third Lieutenant program?” The Commandant paused. “Okay then, I want you to hear from several firsties that have just returned from their summer trips. Listen up men, there are some

lessons-learned for all of you.”

First up was a firstie that I had seen on the Staff Tower before. Not C1C Leisure. This guy was pretty cool. He was from Grand Island, Nebraska and looked really sharp, but his uniform was strange. He was about five-eleven but his cadet trousers looked really wide when he stood to the side on the staff tower. He also wore his flight cap inside Mitches and it looked huge on top of his head. It looked like he had a Mohawk haircut. There was no crease in his trou’ and his cap lacked the signature ‘dent’ that almost all other flight caps had. It almost looked like his hat and pants were one-size-too-big and made out of blue cardboard.

He approached the mike that had been placed back in the podium and he smiled and moved his mouth like he was saying something to us, but nothing was heard. Then he switched on the mike and sounded loud and clear.

What we heard next was unbelievable. Cadet First Class Hector ‘Tweedy’ Nasturtium from Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin was delivering a no-joke account of his participation in the running of the bulls in Pamplona, followed by an unbelievable side trip to Paris, France.

Grillo nudged me. “His younger brother is in our class . . . in Seegrams . . . yup,” he nodded.

To add an air of crisp professionalism to the summer First Looie beta test, Cadet Nasturtium presented his trip report in the new ‘Safety Minute’ format agreed to by the Director of Safety in New Mexico and the Commandant of Cadets in Colorado. Let the record speak for itself.



***Safety Minute 64-0714. Riding, Roping, and Shooting;  
Best Practices for Man and Beast.***

Introduction: my summer competing in the Buzkashi in the high mountains of Afghanistan, time spent bustin' wild broncs in Calgary, and logging time measured in seconds atop a Brahman bull at Noonamah taught me a few lessons that I will never forget. *Give them a show but do it safely.*

Spinal and brain injury trauma are preventable, with a few simple tips. A beast well-ridden or roped will return again and again to thrill the audience and provide good challenge to the cowpoke 'lookin' for eight' or just starting a career in the rodeo.

*First, master the art of 'shootin' and riding' before stepping into the arena.* The best wranglers start out with a healthy respect for their mount and their firearms trade craft before ever stepping into the ring. Just like the Olympics, a seasoned bull rider or bronco buster makes it look easy – but it's not. Any cadet that aspires to a life in the saddle should start spending time with the animals and take advice from skilled and experienced buckaroos. Just as the WWI pilots in the Lafayette Escadrille started out as children 'flying' around their back gardens with their arms extended, today's rodeo champions started out in the 4H clubs or as horse whisperers when they were 'knee high to a grasshopper'.

*Second, just because cowboys and cowgirls are renowned for their ability to 'shoot and ride' doesn't mean that **you** should do both at the same time.* What works on the silver screen looks good to the audience but may result in harm to others the first time you try it in



competition. Many a tenderfoot can attest to the inadvertent discharge of their revolver while calf roping or barrel racing. Seasoned rodeo riders will stash their firearms under the bench seat in their white trucks before they head off to the chutes. Avoid 'rookie errors' that result in self-inflicted gunshot wounds or accidental discharges that scare the puddin' out of the audience or team of judges. Expect a downgrade from a judge or a short count from a timer that has to duck to avoid a weapons discharge during the event.

We all know that judges are 'blind' (chuckle, chuckle), but they sure don't want to be shot at and hit.

*Finally, champions respect their animals and respect their team.* The stereotype of one-man, one-beast is incomplete. Both are important, but let's take a look at best practices for good team management.

Get to know your shankers and muggers. Buy them a few rounds the day before the event. A good shanker and mugger will steady the mount and make it easy for you to saddle-up your bronc at the gate.

Tip your hat and buy a few rounds for the pickup man. A good pickup man will make sure that you get off your animal safely after the bareback and saddle bronc events.

Get to know your rodeo clowns, slip them a few bucks before the event and buy 'em a few rounds after. They're the ones that will draw the bull or bronc away if you fall in the well.

Rodeo champions do all this and more; you should too. Safe riding, roping, and shooting; and happy trails to you my friends.

The presentations continued into the evening and the cadets were riveted in their seats. The Doolies, with almost three years' marking time before their own Third Looie trips dozed respectfully in the balcony. Miss 'P' lifted their heads and gently

placed a mini-pillow behind their 'lil necks. Truth be told, Miss 'P' would have gladly placed a big red Carol Channing kiss on the lips of each and every one.

During a brief intermission, the Comm took to the podium with a lagniappe for all.

"Men," he paused, "I have just approved the play list for the Kamp USAFA Band for the parents weekend parade." He paused. "Drumroll please," he chuckled. "You guessed it men . . . the wing will march back to the base of the ramp to *We've Gotta Get Outa This Place* by Eric Burdon and the Animals."



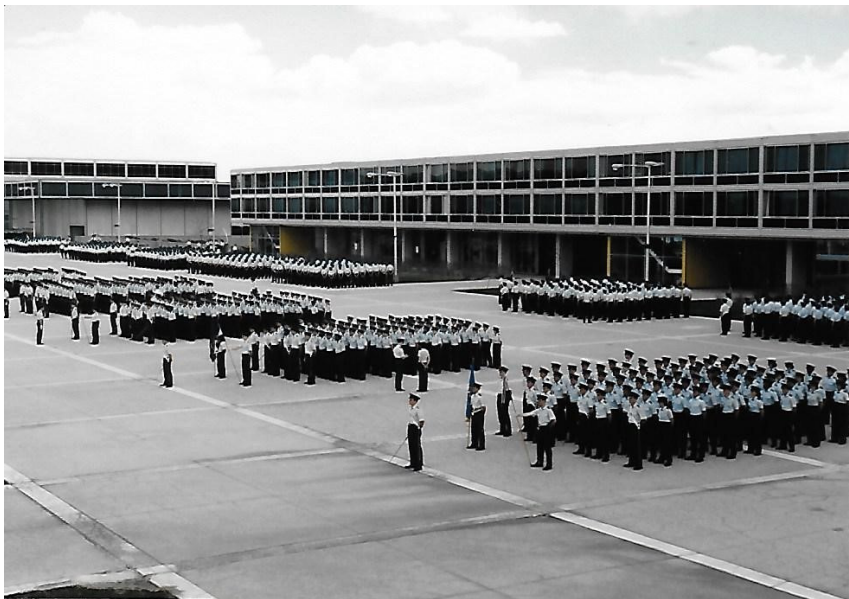
A roar of approval with a plethora of 'balls' rocked the A-Hall theater.

Miss 'P' looked up from a snoozing Smack in the balcony that she was hovering over and puckering up to kiss.

## 4 PARENTS WEEKEND

“Listen up men,” said the Commandant over the newly installed JVC loudspeakers. The sound was crystal clear. ‘Five-by’ in the common vernacular.

The cadet wing stood tall and proud on the terrazzo. Noon meal formation.



From his vestibule in Fairchild Hall, Monty Post turned his binocs’ toward the impressive crest of ‘rotten rocks’ and

sparkling aspen trees behind Harmon Hall. The leaves were popping in yellow and fluttering in the prevailing wind from the west. Sparkle, sparkle, sparkle.

*The chapel is looking good today for the start of Parents Weekend, Monty thought as he panned down and to the left. He paused and inspected the northeast corner of the chapel base. I'll bet that very few know that the spire mounts are repurposed XB-70 wing roots manufactured by Wyman-Gordon in Worcester, Massachusetts.*

The Commandant's voice boomed across the terrazzo.

"You men welcome the parents in the squadron. Take down the pin-up girls and sweethearts on the 'b'-boards. And ease off on the Peter, Paul, and Mary. And to our parents and visitors on the chapel overlook," he paused, "welcome to your United States Air Force Academy."

*Brrrrr rum bum bum ba rum bum bum ba rum bum bum*

The Kamp USAFA Band came alive with the hammering of the big base drums in the 'trancept' leading from the terrazzo stairwell up to the Harmon Hall courtyard.

"Aaaaand," the Commandant said, "Class of Nineteen-Seventy-Six," he paused again, "you . . . are . . . at rest."

The band went quickly silent.

A pause, then a loud roar surged out from the center of the terrazzo. The touri on the chapel overlook shuddered. Not so much the sheer volume. More so the depth of the 'balls' in the shocking 'huzzah'.

Then silence.

Then the approaching rumble of eight General Electric J-79 turbines, two per Phantom.

The ingress was perfectly timed to thrill the 'Dickens' out of the parents and random touri dangling over the Chapel wall.

The lethal fighters from Cannon Air Force Base were coming

in low and fast.

“Ahhh, Tigers . . . speedbrakes . . . now”, flight leader called on hotel fox. The speedbrakes dropped in unison. Throttles were set at ninety-two percent.

The lead Weapon Systems Officer hacked the aircraft clock and moved the radar cursor to the southeast Chapel mount.

‘Gotta good return on radar,’ said the WSO.

Flight lead clicked his intercom. Duly noted.

“Ahhh, Tigers . . . speedbrakes . . . now.” The Phantoms’ planforms smoothed out nicely.

Blue four wobbled a little at two-hundred and eighty knots just a quarter mile south of the New Dorm Corvette parking lot.

*No worry though*, thought Tiger lead, *we’ve got three, two, one . . .*

“Ahhh, Tigers . . . ‘burner . . . now.”

All throttles bumped the mil’ power detent, then stroked burner (one at a time) and ‘walked’ the throttles forward.

The Phantoms were in ‘welded wing’ now.

The primary and secondary fuel pumps were screaming. The J-79s were converting raw jet fuel into the precious and deafening sound of freedom. Mothers on the Chapel wall covered the ears of cadets’ younger brothers and sisters.



The god-squad wondered if Cadet Grillo was in one of them planes.

The dads sucked in their guts and removed their Falcon ball

caps. Cadets' high school sweethearts jumped up and down. WWII and Vietnam veterans popped a salute as the jets roared past.

The air crackled with an electricity that you just don't hear every day. At just under seventy-five-hundred feet above mean sea level, the indicated, calibrated, and equivalent air speed combined with the outside air temperature and standard lapse rate delivered a Mach number of .978. Tiger lead knew that the wing roots and engine intakes were 'teasing the Mach' and the vertical zoom would need to be 'smooth as silk'.

Time stood still. Monty Post fixed his binocs' on the southeast Chapel mount.

In a nanosecond the flight leader would exchange airspeed for altitude and allow the fuel pumps to spray a little more raw fuel into the exhaust. More power for the climb. More thunder for the parents and touri.



The Commandant jumped in his golf cart and sped towards Mitchell Hall and the Staff Tower.

The Comm had two tables reserved with a white board set up for a working lunch and chalk talk. The Cadet Leadership Enrichment Team would facilitate the Noon ‘lunch and learn’ and make sure that nobody from the Department of Political Science and Leadership or from the Department of Biology and Leadership hijacked the Comm’s meeting.

*I’ll darn sure hold the ‘power of the pen’ for this chalk-talk,* the Comm thought to himself. He looked askance at the faculty pukes from Management and Leadership. The football coach was there and drew a nod from the Comm. The Senior Protestant Chaplain looked pretty beat up. *The Green Onion’s PsyOps New Dorm campaign must be taking its toll,* thought the Comm.

He looked at his watch nervously.

“Men . . . ,” he began while the stragglers from Fourth Group were still lollygagging in, “ . . . I want this Parents Weekend to go smooth as silk. You got me?”

The faculty and staff looked at each other thinking *Does he think he is talking to cadets?*

The SOD and OIC both responded respectfully to the Comm with a ‘balsy’ but subdued “We got you sir.”

“Okay, now . . .” he continued as he turned to the white board. “ . . . we have prepared the battlefield.”

All eyes looked on with concern.

“The AOCs and Group AOCs are doing their walk-throughs now. ‘B’-boards and latrines are being checked. I have directed that all ‘civilian’ media is to be removed. I don’t want parents and visitors to think we are running a dating service here. No pin-ups, no squadron sweetheart pictures.”

The staff looked around at each other.

“Now . . . ,” he paused. “ . . . this year’s debriefings will be

handled using the medical community best practices and lessons-learned.”

He looked across at the Psych Instructor and drew a nod. The nod meant that he was ‘on agenda’ and doing a good job implementing the new Dr. Terry Perry leadership for commander’s method. The method required the devotees to think, talk, lead, and write on the board at the same time. Dr. Perry ‘Ninjas’ were certified in the new Japanese production method that included the Dr. Edwards Deming process, the Japanese kan-ban supply chain management method, and the new ‘fishbone’ philosophies advanced by Dr. Kaizen. The Dr. Perry ‘Kaisers’ were certified in the new West German production method that included dressing in black and implementing the new ‘Takt’ methodologies. These included using a wooden clipboard and tapping out a beat using the new Dr. Perry licensed T-ball jotter by the Parker Pen Company.

The Comm continued.

“For the Parents Weekend recovery, I’m handing the pen over to the Hospital Commander. Doctor Wolfbarger T. Doctor. Colonel Doctor?”

He handed the erasable marker to the Colonel.

“Thanks General,” said Colonel Doctor.

While the cadet wing and special guests chowed down at Mitches, the families were migrating over to Arnies for lunch. A few parents and guests filtered into the cadet bowling alley for cheeseburgers and fries. Some walked across the cadet ballroom balcony to the upper-class lounge to grab a beer and a slice. The remainder drifted into the ‘Smack Bar’ for soup and salads, ham sandwiches, grinders, frappes, hot fudge sundaes, and popcorn.

The smoking lamp illuminated, and the Colonel reviewed the bidding on what he had told the Comm’s staff already.



“Okay team,” the Hospital Commander summarized, “. . . we have set up post-Parents Weekend battlefield triage stations . . . here . . . here . . . and here.”

He had already sketched the perimeter of the cadet area beginning with the North Road at the top of the second white board. The New Dorm Road at the bottom of the white board. Two circles in blue dry-erase marker represented the western- and eastern-triage points on the North Road and the same for the New Dorm Road.

Next he pointed to the series of three ‘pudgy’ arrows (he had already drawn) emitting from each triage circle and aimed at the middle of the cadet area. Inward, not outward.

At the point of each arrow the Colonel drew a square that represented a confessional with a letter “C” in the box, an “H” for the honor and ethics debriefing, and a “P” for the primal scream therapy booth.

The Hospital business office had signed contracts with Elite Seats, the same contractor for porta-potties on the cadet athletic fields. The RFP called for bidders to submit quotes to provide twelve executive-salons in turquoise hard-shell plastic with seating for six, a commode, a sink with potable water, hand sanitizer, and a fold-down murphy bed.

Doctor Doctor continued. “Cadets will be marching up the ramps here . . . here . . . here . . . and here,” he said as he drew skinny arrows leading up to the four triage points. “Cadets can write their names on their boxes of Winchell donuts using Magic Markers here and leave the boxes on the long folding tables here, here, or here while they line up for treatment.”

The staff was impressed, the Comm nodded with concurrence.

“Our Protestant and Catholic chaplains will be manning the confessionals marked “C” and will hear the contrite utterances

of those whose consciences were bruised over the long parents weekend. They will comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. For the Jewish and Muslim cadets, we have lay leaders who will incline their ear and administer oils and blessings. For the Hindu and All Faith devotees, there will be contract clergy from Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and south Denver. Penitent cadets experiencing tribulation may offer supplication, prayers, light candles for a small fee, and may apply for indulgences using modest allotments from their cadet ‘magic money’ accounts.”

He paused to catch his breath.

He continued. “Cadets experiencing mild forms of PTSD or general anxiety can request the new ‘primal scream therapy’ popularized by the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. As you know, the ‘Psych’ department has a new procedure for dealing with cadets sleeping in the classroom. When a cadet dozes off, the instructor will signal for the cadet sitting nearest the light switch to kill the room lights. As you know, the classrooms have no windows to the outside, so the room is pitch black. On the whispered count of one . . . two . . . three, all of the cadets scream at the top of their lungs. The sleeping cadet wakes immediately and screams in horror at the thought of being stricken with total blindness.”

He paused again as the staff snickered mildly. Some assumed a pensive demeanor and considered this a good addition to their classroom repertoire. Military Studies (also known as MS – the killer of young cadets) taught by AOCs, STOs, and members of the Comm’s staff. Faculty ‘puke’ from Math, Chem, Bio, Economics and Geography, Poly Sci, Comp Sci, Aero, Astro, and English also nodded in agreement.

Colonel Doctor continued. “Cadets stricken with any general anxiety, pair-bonding syndrome, approach-avoidance

conflict, gender identity afflictions, homo- or xenophobic tendencies can drop their Winchells here . . . here . . . here . . . or here,” he paused and checked the perimeter of the boxes labeled ‘P’.

He turned to check that the Comm’s staff was tracking. They were.

“The Behavioral Sciences majors and squadron faculty officers will gird up their loins and wash the feet of the doolies returning from PW and requesting Freudian or Jungian therapy.”

He paused for the final stretch.

Commandant staffers snuck a peek at their big Seikos.

“The third option is the most grave,” the Doctor paused. “For any cadet whose conscience carries the added burden of a possible HV, a measure of grace may be offered.”

*Whaaaaat . . . the . . . ?* Thought the OIC and SOD.



In a bygone era, cadets would merely return from PW, polish off the box of Winchells, report to the squadron honor and ethics officer and confess. Falling down at the feet of the first classman and groveling. Pleading to remain at Kamp USAFA after violating the very letter of the cadet honor code.

Those that lied to their girlfriends about not harboring lustful thoughts about ex-girlfriends or the girl at the candy store in Fairchild Hall.

Those that lied to their mothers about the true meaning of “meanest mutha in the valley”. An unfortunate slip of the

tongue, when attempting to communicate the pathos of the cadet Jacks Valley experience to civilians.

Those that cheated on their best girl back home by a lustful gaze at the cashier at Giuseppe's Central, a new girl they met downtown – perhaps a sister of a classmate visiting to see her big brother 'the cadet' during PW.

Those that copped a feel or stole a kiss from a Lo-Hi freshman that they met at the first Arnold Hall dance while they have a fiancée back home with the promise of a Chapel wedding less than four years from now.

Those that cheated in the smallest of ways but came to the full knowledge and realization of the grave consequences that would follow.

*What of the thieves then? thought the SOD. Do they not warrant the same 'second chance' offered by the triage unit to the perpetrators of the lie or the cheating? Are not thieves afforded the same measure of grace? Are not thieves who stole a Big Hunk from the Seven-Eleven gas station – are they not worthy of love too?*

“And yet, my colleagues, I have misgivings. This would have never come to pass at the ‘Point,” the Doctor said as he fumbled then dropped the erasable marker on the floor.

“Yes, yes, thank you Colonel Doctor,” said the Commandant bending over to pick up the dry erase marker and placing a hand of comfort on the Hospital Commander's shoulder as he stood to his full height.

“Let's thank the Hospital Commander for his good explanation of the preparation that has taken place for the cadets' return after PW.”

“Hear, hear, old boy,” the Comms staff agreed in somber unison. “Good plan for the PW.”

The Colonel seemed a bit dejected after having planned and presented the tour de force.

*Could it be that I have forgotten the most important part?* He asked himself.

“What of the clean consciences?” whispered the Deputy Director of Athletics and Leadership to the Permanent Professor of Chemistry and Leadership.

Both stole a glance at the Hospital Commander who was packing his briefcase to go. His lack of eye contact was telling.

“Not to worry,” the Chemistry Prof whispered back. “I recall my own box of Winchells and my own slow walk back to the squadron after PW. Peter, Paul, and Mary played all right. But it didn’t affect me much. I didn’t have a girl back home or out here, no ill effects from a weekend with my parents, and they did not have a name yet for the ‘meanest mutha’.”

The Deputy Director of Athletics concurred in silence and both took a long drag on their cigarettes.



## 5 L'ECOLE DE L'AIR

ON FINAL approach for landing, the Seegram Seven three-degrees seated on the right side of the bomber had a perfect view of the Eiffel Tower zipping past them. *Magnifique!*, thought Grillo.

Franco had indeed delivered on his promise to transport the cadets from Pamplona to Paris most riki-tik for the Bastille Day celebration and the completion of the Tour de France.

A small detail was lost on the cadets in the back of the vintage bomber but not on the AOC. Major Snedd had been instructed by the Commandant 'Better take that Heinkel 111 army surplus bomber on a shakedown flight – when you and the troops check out l'Ecole de l'Air'. The AOC shuddered knowing that the last time native Parisians saw Heinkels overhead was when the Nazi storm troopers were marching into the City of Lights.

To make matters worse, the Comm had issued a direct verbal order that the AOC bring his wife on the trip. "I don't want to get any calls from the Air Attaché about your troops conducting any urban assault panty-raids at la Sorbonne (*chuckle, chuckle*)."

Nevertheless, the AOC, the AOC's wife, and the Class of

Seventy-Five that were first-timers to Paris were caught-up in wild anticipation as they flipped back and forth through their English-French dictionaries and their dog-eared copies of *Europe on Five Dollars a Day*.

The contingent including Grillo and Lapinski (imported from Double Deuce), Daggerty and Sweeney (formerly of Dirty Thirty), Newbeck, McSchwartz, O'Bannon, Nasturtium, Kalalabad, Stardust, Spiggott, Zawicki, Speedwagon, Gahenna, Weirnam, d'Vine, Smurtsburgher, Poe, Cognos, François, Young, Zugspitze, and Bartholomew X. Taylor (from Paso Robles, California) were all part of the ADVON team. They were making sure that l'Ecole de l'Air was the real deal and not a bogus scam perpetrated by the spit-birds at West Point or Annapolis.

Fogarty and Boyle had already told the AOC they would resign after three-degree year. The war was in fact winding down and Nixon was bringing the boys home.

Freda Payne's hit *Band of Gold* was followed by her Billboard hit *Bring the Boys Home*. *I guess the politicians in DC had their radios turned on.*

Winnebago-Superbus remained at home. To allow him to visit the l'Ecole in advance of his nomination for a semester abroad would have constituted a flagrant conflict of interest.

Cadets Lucchese, Niblick, and Neugaarten had been disapproved for the squadron exchange visit to Paris. The Director of Fine Arts and Leadership had selected random cadets to remain behind to serve as 'extras' for the PBS reenactment of the Marine Corps attack and victory at Mount Suribachi. The Green Onion was the technical advisor and military consultant for the reenacted assault on the flatiron.

The add-on ADVON trip to France was a big frickin' deal for the yellow-tags of Seven because they were required on pain

of an honor board to vote honestly whether their Seegram Seven classmate Winnebago-Superbus should or should not be given the ‘nod’ for a semester at the l’Ecole de l’Air.

*The fall semester, two-degree year is just four short months away,* thought Grillo, the unofficial Seegram class leader and self-appointed tormenter of the god-squad.

On the last leg of the flight to Paris, O’Bannon, Doggerty, Charles d’Vine, McSchwartz, and Nasturtium each permitted themselves an assortment of implausible fantasies with French-speaking members of the opposite sex.

O’Bannon thought back to a too-close friendship that he fostered while in prep school with an exchange student from Versailles.

McSchwartz had heard one confession too many from soldiers returning to the ‘States after ‘Nam (while he was a lay leader in the Catholic Church before he completed his conversion to Judaism). *Too much information,* he thought.

Cadet Third-Class Charles d’Vine a possible descendant of King Charlemagne, fancied himself a chevalier in the form and fashion familiar during the Golden Age of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. *I studied the royal family tree for my high school AP class in European History,* he thought, *too bad they got the axe.*

Nasturtium couldn’t help but think about the au pair that his parents used as a babysitter and the spankings that she would administer (while he was still a pre-teen).

Flights of fancy continued as the brave pilot and co-pilot lined up on then flew right over l’Arc de Triomphe de l’Étoile. French speaking celebrants on the top of the Arch dove for cover. One white-haired elderly couple from Baden-Baden stood tall and proud as the Heinkel bomber flew right overhead. A cub reporter from the Match swore that the geezer gave the Nazi bomber the ‘Seig heil!’ salute as it passed.



His editor said ‘Bullshit, they don’t do that anymore’.

The whimsy that the three-smokes were experiencing inside the plane was in stark contrast to the horror that was witnessed on the pavement below.

A woman with heavy breasts ran screaming down the middle of l’Avenue hollering “They’re back, they’re back.”

A pack of American Eagle Scouts headed to a Camporee in the Alps reached for their Swiss Army Knives and looked through trash cans and dumpsters for empty beer bottles and anything else that could be fashioned into weapons suitable for hand-to-hand combat.

A Japanese tourist with a Minolta took his wife’s Yves St. Laurent silk scarf and wrapped it around his forehead in preparation for the attack.

A bus load of Dutch tourists from Amsterdam surrendered to a street food vendor selling beer brats and Weiner schnitzel. He was just a humble butcher, a native of nearby Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.

The driver of an antique canary-yellow Citroën 2CV crashed into a fire hydrant in front of a café. The patrons that rushed to his aid said that he either died of fright or had a heart attack.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist from l’Indépendant phoned in a report that the Nazis were back in Paris.

The Bastille Day organizers managed to restore order to the madness about an hour after the Heinkel taxied to a stop and discharged its American passengers at la Place de la Concorde.

When the side door of the bomber swung open the AOC made Grillo hop out first. His head popped out first then he rendered his signature smile followed by a relaxed salute to nobody in particular. The City of Lights held its breath until he stepped out in a green tweed summer suit with braces.

“Mon Dieu, les Allemands jamais porter tweed.”  
“C’est vrai, les Américains sont arrivés.”

With the hand of friendship extended to Snedd and his entourage, the city officials accepted the Heinkel bomber as a gift of friendship from their Kamp USAFA allies.

“Quelque chose pour le Musée de la Grand Guerre,” said the pilot as he tossed the keys to Eddy Merckx, the honorary Mayor of Paris.

Less than two hours ago the President Georges Pompidou trotted off to find a respectable toilette. The Chief inspector removed his cape and draped it over the exhausted first-place finisher while the half-naked hospitality crew planted red-lipstick kisses on both cheeks while pressing into ‘Eddy’ with monstrous bouquets.

The font-page full-color images appeared that afternoon in La Monde and in the daily extra for La République.

Snedd snuck off in the middle of what appeared to be an endless parade of Champagne bottles, toasts, patriotic songs, and cheers for the riders that were still streaming in from the Tour.

*I’ve got to cop-a-shave while I have the chance, the AOC thought as he gently rubbed the stubble on his prominent chin. I’ll be back before the cadets know that I’m gone.*



## 6 BOWLING BALLS

SCANDAL rocked Seegram Seven while the AOC and ADVON team were still in Paris.

It seemed as though one of the Seegram doolies got the big idea of stealing a bowling ball from the cadet lanes in Arnold Hall. He did it the 'old fashioned way'. Navigated the surface of the terrazzo using the white marble strips and the normal public entrances and exits. He was smart enough to bring a laundry bag to hide the bowling ball, the same way upper classmen use a laundry bag to transport beer or motorcycle helmets during daytime operations.

The clever Smack did confer with the honor and ethics hot line and asked one question with his mouth full of marbles.

"Mmmmm, if I borrow a bowling ball from the cadet area, never leave the cadet area with it, and put it back when I am done . . . is that stealing?"

The voice on the other end of the hotline paused for a moment and then responded with a hesitant "Nnnnn, no, no its not."

Click went the receiver back into the cradle.

The problem, of course, was that the honor and ethics

hotline was designed to **report** suspected honor violations. The doolie had basically used the hotline to request permission to break the ‘Code’.

What happened next really put Seegram Seven on the map.

While the doolie was running rampant with the bowling ball, the ADVON team was completing their trip report while still in Paris. The pièce de résistance would be this new Safety Minute expected by the Commandant for presentation to the Director of Safety at Kirtland Air Force Base.

Cadet Third-Class Doggerty formerly of CS-30 was given the honor of drafting and test-narrating the codified Safety Moment in a non-combat environment. He began:



C3C Chance P. Doggerty,  
Worcester, Massachusetts

***Safety Minute 64-0715. Les Bateaux Mouches, Safe and Seine (chuckle, chuckle) Operations Day and Night.***

The River Seine and the barges add so much to the romanticism of Paris, the City of Lights. It is no surprise that l'Office National du Tourisme Français includes river boat rides on every top-ten list except one.

Doggerty held up the English language flyer: “The magic of the river and the lights add so much to the romance of the City. ‘Darling, let’s take a river boat cruise when we honeymoon in Paris.’”

Now take a look at a few of the benefits of a river boat ride on the Seine. A smooth ride to be sure, the river and the boats glide past some of the most recognizable structures and

architectural styles. You can see la Cathédrale Notre Dame, le Musée d'Orsay (le musée d'impressionnistes), les Pont Neuf et Pont Alexandre III et plus de trente, l'Île de la Cité, et la Tour Eiffel peeking above the skyline.

Les bateaux mouches travel at a speed of between five and ten nautical miles per hour (or knots). This allows for a smooth ride and keeps the captain from spilling the passengers' vin rouge (chuckle, chuckle).

“Let's cover a few best practices to ensure that your ride on the River Seine is safe and enjoyable,” Daggerty continued.

*First, the bateau mouche is first and foremost a boat!* Be sure to perform a cursory inspection of the boats lined up at the point of embarkation. Not exactly a ‘walk-around’ inspection (chuckle, chuckle) these boats are in the water of course. But you can still perform a visible inspection that will give you a ‘warm fuzzy’ if the boat has been well maintained. Look for evidence of fresh paint and that the hull above the waterline has been scraped clean of barnacles and other marine life. Be sure to interview the captain and complement him on his stately bearing and impressive watercraft.

“The French are a proud and noble people. If the ‘shoe fits’ the captain will beam with pride, stand a few inches taller, and close his eyes as he smiles, then respond with a heartfelt ‘merci bien’”.

This reaction will tell you everything you need to know about the captain as well as the boat. The captain will exercise great care to return the boat and passengers safely back to the starting point.

If the captain just shrugs his shoulders or looks over his shoulder beware. At best he lacks the customary sense of pride exuded by great sea captains and victorious military commanders. At worst, he forgot to check the bilge pump and

the craft is slowly taking on water.

*Second, remember that these barges are powered by internal combustion engines that are mounted below deck.* As with every inboard-powered watercraft, there are a few important checklist items to review.

Just like outboards, inboard engines require the same ingredients to power the craft through the water: a source of ambient air (for oxygen), fuel (petrol or diesel), and a spark to invigorate the engine and deliver torque to the propellers.

A major difference between inboard- and outboard-powered vessels is the need to ventilate the engine compartment of the inboards. This is accomplished by air intakes that may appear as vents or ports above deck, ducting that provides fresh airflow around the engines and fuel tanks, and exhaust ports that allow the fuel vapors to escape overboard and behind the craft.

Together these allow for safe operation of the craft and minimize explosions below deck (chuckle, chuckle) caused by a static electric spark or a carelessly discarded cigarette butt.

*Third, a little knowledge about marine lighting goes a long way for nighttime operations.* You will be taking a romantic cruise that may begin at civil twilight and continue after sunset. Let's take a few minutes to review the international standards for shipboard lighting for safe operations on the water.

C3C Doggerty held up the white light lantern that he borrowed from the captain. The 'demonstrator' C3C Charles d'Vine stepped forward, unfolded the tarp, fluffed it open like a magician would, then spread it out on top of the table in the cleared-out space amidships.

"All watercraft are required to display the international maritime colors red, white, and green popularized by the Italian aerial aerobatic demonstration team," announced Doggerty who was about to go down a rabbit trail.

For all those who have not had an opportunity to attend one

of their air shows, a brief summary is in order. The Frecce Tricolori is officially known as the Gruppo Addestramento Acrobatico. The 'Frecce' is the aerobatic demonstration team of the Italian Aeronautica Militare, based at Rivolto Air Force Base. They have a mediocre safety record which includes just a few more incidents and mid-air accidents than the Thunderbirds and Blue Angels. None hold a candle to the Royal Air Force's Red Arrows, whose flying safety record is known to be impeccable. When it comes to flying close formation, the 'Frecce', like all the others are world renowned for record setting. More than three hundred and thirty unmarried women can boast that they have a future fighter pilot in the family. Not just a few married females of the species can boast the same.

As farmers take to the sea, and as sailors take to the air, it is not surprising that the colors red, white, and green adorn seagoing vessels in the same way that they do their high-flying counterparts. Nor is it a mere coincidence that ships are attributed the characteristics of aircraft (a la 'the Flying Clipper'). Nor is it peculiar that an aircraft, whether it be powered by a turbine or reciprocating power plant would be described as a 'ship' or 'gunship'.

The external lighting in red, white, and green gives further credence to the generally accepted theory that aircraft evolved from their seaborne predecessors. Both sport a white light on the stern whenever the craft has started engines and is underway. Both ship and plane refer to the left side of the craft as the 'port' side (from the captain's perspective in the wheelhouse or cockpit). Good fortune that port wine is red and that provides a device to recall that the port side is the left side (both being spelled with four letters), and that color of the port-side light is red (just like red wine or port wine).

This leaves only one color remaining, and that is for the

starboard side of the craft, the right side. Doggerty pointed left, right, and center with the hand flail.

Just remember as you board the bateau mouche, check to make sure that the white lantern is hanging in the stern of the vessel. As you walk forward to your seat look to the port side (left) for the red lamp and look to the starboard side (right) for the green lamp.



With a very romantic Safety Minute in the bag, Doggerty clicked his heels and insisted that his assistant and classmate Charles d’Vine stand alongside him and take the first, second, and third bow together in unison. They did.

At the commencement of the ovation it was evident that Mrs. Robinson, the AOC’s wife had collapsed from exhaustion at the conclusion of the safety minute.

With more than ten tender French virgins in attendance, Mrs. ‘Snedd’ had first permitted herself the indulgence to wilt like a flower into the upholstered arms of her salon – an antique English fainting couch. That was at the moment when C3C Doggerty approached her but then stopped amidships for a purpose yet unknown and unknowable.

At the advent of what we all now acknowledge to be a brand new safety minute – a command performance for Mrs. Robinson alone (albeit the members of her court were in attendance) – Mrs. ‘Snedd’ was overcome by what could only be described as supreme bliss at a level just short of rapture.

Were it not that every Seegram three-degree present had



witnessed countless safety minutes delivered by Doggerty himself; and were it not that each safety minute was executed with the bombastic precision of a symphony conductor bringing Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture to crescendo; the virgins that hovered like cherubs around Mrs. Robinson as if she were the subject of Il Sassoferrato's masterpiece would have turned and railed against Doggerty's display of safety bravado as an emotional excess of the worst kind.

As it was though, the safety minute was deemed to be à propos and timely, and most relevant and compelling in light of the events of the evening which included the obvious fact that they were shoving off onto the River Seine in the City of Lights. In the end, there remained nary a cadet nor spectator, neither an ingenue nor young sylph that had the basis for throwing the first stone in the matter.

A self-appointed squad of Seegram Seven sophomores quickly returned the configuration of the barge to its original condition before the safety minute. The pew seating was restored much to the ship captain's delight. All passengers, including Doggerty and his assistant for the performance, circulated with the other Kamp USAFA ambassadors on deck to admire the iconic landmarks that were now passing off the port and starboard sides of the ship.

*Red and green (chuckle, chuckle)*, thought Grillo to himself. Anyone noticing would have seen his lips pucker to the side of his mouth. The word he was whispering sounded like "Sweeeeeet."

If Cadet Doggerty were not reveling in the afterglow of having created a thing of beauty on the fly, he would have noticed a subtle but exceedingly dangerous development at the stern of the barge. Nothing having to do with Mrs. Robinson herself, for she was resting comfortably with eyes closed and the

look of an angel on her face.

It was the virgins-in-waiting. Unbeknownst to the three-smokes, each of the four original virgins who moved instinctively to protect Mrs. Robinson's right and left flanks were still exhibiting a level of anxiety similar to the 'fight or flight syndrome'. Any amateur psychologist could have anticipated that the heightened state of arousal caused by a real or imagined threat, in this case Doggerty's approaching the stern of the ship with rope, a hand flail, a white tarp, and a lantern, would also require either a transformational event or an extended period of time for the subjects' condition to dissipate.

Cultural anthropologists with even a rudimentary understanding of general psychology know that a Neanderthal's heart will pound to the point of bursting in his chest at the sight of a saber-toothed tiger. And it does not require the understanding of a thoracic surgeon to conclude that the cave man's blood pressure will drop very quickly in the near-term. Our knuckle dragging friend's heart will either burst, he will be killed by the beast, or he will kill and eat the beast and will live to finger-paint a scene of the battle on the walls inside his cave. In any case, the prehistoric state of high anxiety will manifest for a very short time and then return to stasis.

The condition of the four virgins was considerably more dire and bordering on acute histrionics. The events leading up to the safety minute were traumatic thanks to their native protective instincts and the active imaginations of the four tender virgins who had not known a man in a Biblical way. In most cases the psychosocial anxiety would have dissipated over a period of time not unrelated to the time required for the advent of hypertension before the event. In a word, the onset of anxiety after seeing the rope and hand flail and watching Doggerty approach Mrs. Robinson was less than three minutes.

Once the threat to the AOC's wife was dissipated through logic and inference that the stage was being set for a mere safety minute, the recovery should have begun and completed in three minutes or less.

That was not the case and for good reason. Doggerty's transitions are lightning quick and most occur without any warning or time for preparation.

Let it just be said that at the point in time when the virgins' recovery should have commenced, Doggerty's flamboyant delivery of the very special safety minute held the four in a state of heightened exhilaration for an additional eighty-two seconds. This does not sound like a great deal more than the initial three minutes it is true.

In the case of the tender virgins however, the nature of the preconditions, coupled with the bombastic splendor of the safety minute, together constituted a significant emotional event the likes of which most civilians outside of Kamp USAFA may never experience. For the virgins, the vivid and salient four and a half minutes pushed them over the top.

The grave concern now was whether time alone would permit them to gradually return to the state of normalcy characterized by a complete absence of arrhythmia, violent palpitations, shortness of breath, fainting spells, and vain imaginings; or whether the nature of the arousal would require each to retreat to her secret garden to close her eyes and allow her subconscious mind to transport her back to the remembrance of Kamp USAFA that cadets of all classes, all Xenophons, and all virgins-in-waiting cherish in their heart of hearts.

Needless to say, this new safety moment was a tour de force.

With Doggerty and d'Vine becoming the self-appointed safety evangelists of Seegram Seven, several other things were

happening.

First of all, Grillo took note of the emphasis on safety and would later save the lives of his airline passengers and become the 'poster boy' for all things debonair.

Zawicki and Speedwagon would declare comp sci majors and would strike up a peculiar friendship with a civilian DVP that was seen in and around the Billy Boroughs enclave.

"We don't think he's gay," said Zawicki to Grillo. "He checks out the skirts – civvies pulling system admin duty during the daytime operations. We also heard a rumor that he 'chatted up' some of the doolies' moms over parents' weekend."



But the worst thing of all was fermenting back home.

What was rumored to be an innocent bowling ball incident would blossom into a full-blown disaster.

The AOC was advised that the doolie could not be brought up on honor and ethics charges because he had asked the honor and ethics hot line if the act was permissible.

"Turns out that he taped the recording on his Radio Shack tape recorder with one of those plastic telephone pick-up mikes," the Judge Advocate General said to the AOC over the phone.

"Snedd, you're gonna hafta do better if you want to get him to resign after final exams," added the JAG. "Turns out his old man is a shylock with the ACLU and wants to institute 'due process under the law.' I'm not sure where the heck he came up with that idea. Probably one of those commie-pinko university brown bag lunches or something."

“And to make matters worse the Comm said I better not ‘drop a dime’ on him with the Green Onion’s honor investigation team, the way we did with those guys over in ‘Gate.’”

“Okay, thanks for the heads-up,” Wilbur. “Stuff like this never happened in my ROTC unit at Champaign Urbana.”

“Sorry Snedd, I hope the Comm goes easy on you,” the JAG paused. “Say wait a minute . . . let me give you a phone number to call . . . there’s this guy. They call him a janitor or a plumber or something. They say he developed a technique for fixing problems . . . wait . . . here it is . . . are you ready to copy?”



The Deputy Comm slammed the phone down on the receiver and chips of black plastic bounced off the glass pane window overlooking the air gardens.

“Get me Sneddekker!” he shouted to his executive officer with the blue shoulder braids.

“Sorry sir, he’s in the Comm’s office.”

“Whaaaaat . . . wait until I get my hands . . . .” he burst through the Comms closed door and advanced in Snedd’s direction as if ready to choke him to death.

“Wait just a minute,” said the Comm to his Deputy. The Comm advanced to block the path of his red-faced deputy dog.

“I have referred this one to the Department of Computer Science and Leadership. Turns out that the Dean wants to consider this an academic matter and the plaintiff is a Department Head in geography or civil engineering or poly sci

or something.”

“Whaaaaaat the . . .” the Deputy Comm ejaculated.

“Not so fast,” the Comm added confidently, “the Super said that I can delegate the report of survey to anyone I want to.”

“Technically, these men all work for me. The plaintiff is under the Dean’s authority . . . and besides, he called me and asked to lead up the investigation.”

“Who did . . . ?”

“The Dean did, the Dean called me and said he wanted Comp Sci to lead up the investigation.”

“Sneddekker, did you have anything to do with this?” the Deputy Comm retorted still red-faced.

“This is the first I have heard of it,” said Major Sneddekker. He lied.



The facts of the case were initially reviewed by the JAG until the Super walked down the hallowed halls of Harmon, entered the inner sanctum of Air Force Justice and asked for the folder.

The JAG willingly agreed, handed the hang-file to his secretary, who delivered it into the Super’s hand.

The Super hollered “Thanks Wilbur” from out in the gatekeeper’s lounge, turned on a heel, and walked back to his palatial offices.

When he returned to his enclave, the Super fed the contents of the file into the shredder. Plausible deniability (chuckle, chuckle).

The files were obliterated, then the phone rang in the Super’s

office. It was the Dean.

“Boss, one of my guys will conduct the report of survey,” the Dean offered casually.

“Okay, just make sure we stay off the front page,” the Supt smiled.

“Will do boss,” and that was that. Click.



The information that became the subject of intense rumor was very simple indeed.

Months ago, the C4C with the bowling ball had been selected for doolie dining out at the Hospital Commander’s home in senior officer’s housing. The property was at the base of a huge hill. Looking up from the bottom, he saw the Kamp USAFA Hospital at the top of the hill. The visual image stayed with him for a long time.

When his English literature L-2 lecture hall instructor was ill, the Permanent Professor for the Department of English and Leadership filled in just for fun. That’s where the problem began. The professor told the class of three- to four-hundred Smacks that he was here to help them all ‘straighten out their Longfellow’. That was a mistake. Not the off-color nature of the joke. That happened all the time in the aluminum womb of academic freedom and in the domain of an all-male student body.

The lecture hall broke out in uproarious laughter and every eye in the room turned to their classmate – C4C Aloysius Zimbarto Longfellow, from Tuscaloosa, Alabama. They even

pointed at him and said “Longfellow, you suck.”

During all of first beast and Jacks Valley his classmates had made fun of his first name and middle name.

Now the Permanent Professor just scored a direct hit on his last name. This was more than he could bear.

Within the hour, he called the honor and ethics hotline then hung up as soon as they answered. He was not quite ready to talk to them yet.

*Gotta sneak downtown to Radio Shack*, he thought.

He made the ‘spy gear’ purchase downtown then came back to the cadet area and called the honor and ethics hotline again. This time he was prepared for action.





## 7 WINNEBAGO MAN

NO SOONER did the ADVON team return to the cadet area to resume their schedule of third-class core courses and intramurals than another scandal rocked Seegram Seven.

Major Alex B. Sneddekker slammed the receiver down on the cradle in his AOC's office. The black plastic handle cracked down the middle exposing green, white, yellow, and red wires.

*Two crises are more than I can handle*, Snedd' confessed sheepishly

"CCQ, get your assets in here," he hollered out into the Seegram Seven hallway.

"Where's Winnebago-Superbus?"

"Sir, dunno sir!" blurted the CCQ washing down a two-day old Winchell donut with a cup of cold coffee.

Then he sprinted around his CCQ desk and popped a salute standing in the AOC's doorway.

Major 'Snedd' returned the salute.

"Sir, . . . have not seen him this morning yet, sir!" added the CCQ.

"Did you check the class schedule yet mister?"

"No sir, but I'll put a note on his door and catch him when

he returns from the fourth period to dress for the noon meal formation.” He paused then popped another salute and added “Sir!”

“Not so fast mister CCQ,” Snedd added. “I think he is hiding somewhere, maybe the tunnels, maybe the new confessionals.”

The CCQ was confused.

What Snedd and the Commandant’s staff knew, but was still classified secret and ‘need to know’, was that the Air Force Chief of Chaplains had approved the conversion of the cadet squadron AT&T phone booths into confessionals to preserve first amendment freedoms.

What’s worse is that the Chief of Chaplains had secured the funding. Everyone knows that the best way to kill a federal program is to de-fund it.

“But he already has the funding,” hollered the Commandant to his staff.

“Yessir, I know,” said the Deputy Comm. “To make matters worse, the ACLU’s op-ed in the Stars and Stripes said that cadets could seek indulgences the way they did in the middle ages.”

“Tell me more,” said the Comm.

“May I?” added the Senior Protestant Chaplain, moving to the now familiar white board in the Comm’s conference room.

“Please do, Padré,” said the Comm, looking around the room for any signs of rebellion.

The chaplain sketched an outline of Edinburgh’s Saint Giles cathedral. He left enough white space to add the numerous ingress vectors used by penitents seeking refuge in the sanctity of the church. Then he began.

“Those escaping persecution would run up the steps as they

shed their earthly burdens. Discarding silverware stolen from the manor house, shedding garments filled with scraps of food and beggar's coins, letting brass candlesticks, plates, and saucers tumble where they fell. Lead crystal and bone china smashing to bits as the refugees sprinted toward the unlocked wooden doors of the cathedral," summarized the chaplain.

He continued. "In many cases, those seeking absolution would enter the church in their birthday suits or just wearing filthy undergarments. It was not unusual for the monks and scribes to drape the confessing sinner in ornate tapestries. Many would stumble under the sheer weight of the heavy silk coverings as they were led to the altar."

"Tell them what this means for Kamp USAFA," the Commandant cut to the chase.

"Oh . . . okay . . . right," said the chaplain.

He collected his thoughts.

"If . . . if the Air Force Chief of Chaplains gets his way, then," he paused, "then . . . cadets that are guilty but have not yet been formally accused of an honor violation can seek refuge in the new confessionals . . . just like they did in the middle ages."

The AOC's looked at each other awestruck.

"I . . . I can't believe this is happening," said the Deputy Comm.

"We'd better believe it because it's already happening," said the Comm. "The AT&T technicians are already disconnecting the rotary-dial phones in the wooden booths. Vandenberg and New Dorm. Turning them into simple wooden boxes fit to be repurposed as confessionals. They are installing the new push-button phones in the stairwells with the mini-privacy shields. No privacy at all, just like the phones in Fairchild."

"What can we do?" asked the CS-32 AOC. "Can we

automatically declare all cadets ‘de facto accused’ of an HV ‘to the best of our knowledge?’ That way we can pull the trigger as the cadet runs from Fairchild Hall, the Library, or from their room to the confessionals. We can catch them in mid-stride using the command post microphones and loudspeakers in the hallways. I’m sure that C1C Leisure will help us with the interceptions. What do you think, sir?”

“Better not,” the Comm responded. “The last time we tried something like that, the ACLU accused us of not following due process.”

“Where’d they come up with that ‘due process’ anyway?” whispered Snedd to the Bull Six AOC.



Meanwhile, the doolie with the bowling ball stashed in his laundry bin was ready to execute.

At taps, he was already under the covers and the lights were out. The sheet and blue blanket were pulled up all the way and tucked under his chin. Without pulling off the covers, even a cadet clinic physician could not tell if he was completely naked or clad in full parade dress, or anything in between.

The CCQ was making the rounds checking that all name tag flags were set to ‘authorized’. They were. All the chicks were in the nest.

The CCQ’s footsteps found their way back to the lonely CCQ desk with the single lamp canister illuminating the hallway by the AOC’s office. The day was almost over. A couple of hours of paperwork to close out the sign out logs, to check the

class schedules for the next day, and to finish a few more chapters in the NY Times bestseller *The Winds of War*.

The doolie opened his eyes and looked around the darkened room while his pupils adjusted to the dim light trickling in from under the door. He clambered out of bed fully dressed in all black.

He slowly slid the laundry bin open and removed the laundry bag and placed it in the sink. The navy watch cap next, out of the bin and onto his head. Then the black shoe polish that he hastily smeared on his face, avoiding his eyes. He wiped his fingers off using dirty black socks in the bin. Then he gently lifted the dark blue with silver sparkles bowling ball out of its hiding place in the bin and placed it carefully on the laundry bag in the sink.

The bowling ball was then placed inside the laundry bag. Everything else went into the laundry bin before it was slid closed again.

His turned the doorknob and slowly opened the door just a few inches. His right hand groped for the name tag flag that he switched silently from “authorized” to “other”.

Then he slipped out of Vandenberg Hall undetected.

By the time he navigated to Douglass Valley using only dead reckoning it was after 2:00 am the next day and freezing cold.

The clear sky with a million stars allowed all the heat from the earth to escape into outer space. ‘Radiational cooling’ was the term that his Airmanship 103 – Weather for Commanders instructor used. There were no comforting blankets of cloud to protect him from the cold vacuum of space. He was lonely and felt sorry for himself. *Why do I have to do this all alone?* he thought.

The scrub oak tugged at his black ski slacks, turtleneck, and black ski jacket. Any military historian would commend him for

his strategy and tactics.

He owned the high ground that would most assuredly give him the advantage. *And*, he thought, *the benefit of surprise to defeat a sleeping enemy.*

Fortune granted him a boon. The Permanent Professor's Lincoln Town Car was parked on the driveway and pulled forward to present its windshield as an easy target.

The slope of the hill leading up to the doolie's hiding place was unobstructed. No bushes, no trees, and no boulders.

He released the bowling ball and prayed silently.

The invisible orb bounced and bounded as it gained speed and hopped over small twigs and tore through the dry grasses.

As the bowling ball approached its target at more than sixty miles per hour it was illuminated by two dim streetlights and the bright flood light in the professor's carport.

The Lincoln's windshield exploded into a million bits of glass. Had there been a driver preparing to back the vehicle out of the drive, he would have been killed instantly. All the drivers were in bed.

Lights inside the subject's house began to illuminate sequentially from the back bedroom to the kitchen, then to the hallway leading to the garage. Then the neighbors' inside lights started coming on. Next door to the right, then the houses to the left, then the houses across the street.

Senior officers in bathrobes began to emerge onto sidewalks and lawns, driveways and then across the street to the English professor's house to survey the battle damage.

High above the mêlée, the doolie had already abandoned his observation post for the long dark trek back to the cadet area.

Then the sirens.

He had not considered that one of the first actions in Douglass Valley would be to summon the Air Police to catch

the perpetrator of the malicious mischief.

*Oh dear, what to do, what to do?* he thought.

He panicked and realized that it took him almost two hours to make his way to senior officer housing. The return trip would be fraught with many dangers, toils, and snares.

Were he to run back to the dark squadron on paved roads from where he was now, he could do it in twenty-three minutes.

*Should have carried my 'magic shoes',* he thought bitterly. *Can't match my personal best in these combat boots. How stupid.*

By the time he made it back to the falcon overlook, all the terrazzo and air garden lights were fully illuminated. A garbled message was being broadcast over the new JVC loudspeakers over and over again.

By the time he crossed all seven rows in the New Dorm Corvette parking lot the blue flashing lights were bouncing off every window in the south-facing New Dorm.

The terrazzo and dorm hallways and stairwells were crawling with police with M-16s, and C1C Leisure and his command post staff with M-1 rifles loaded with dummy rounds left over from 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT. Miss 'P' was even seen inside the command post wrapped in a \$275 Coco Channel cashmere housecoat and matching slippers. She was ordering one of C1C Leisure's command post cadet NCOs to 'drop for twenty'.

Every light in the cadet area was turned on.

Shouts were heard at sporadic intervals. Several gunshots were heard, probably 'blanks'.

There was only one way for the doolie to make it back to his room undetected.

*The tunnels,* he thought as he scrambled undetected through the HVAC grille in the ground level men's bathroom.



“Cadet Winnebago-Superbus, reporting as ordered sir!” shouted with ample ‘balls’ in his voice.

“Come inside Missssster Superbus,” Major Sneddekker directed. “You’ve been a busy young cadet, haven’t you?”

*This is a trap, Winnebago-Superbus thought, he’s trying to get me to give him a definitive answer. Yes or no. What to do?*

“Well sir,” he answered still standing at attention having dropped the salute.

“Well sir, what? Mister Superbus.”

“Well sir, I don’t know what you mean sir. Correction please sir,” he added. “I do not know what you mean.”

*He’s regressing backwards, the AOC thought. Doolies aren’t allowed to use contractions. I give wide berth to the three-smokes. They know that! He must feel guilty. Keep digging Snedd, keep digging man!*

To push the C3C Ivan Winnebago-Superbus off-kilter, the AOC adopted a seldom used but very effective device.

The AOC grabbed the sides of his trousers with the thumbs and index fingers of both hands. Then he lifted the fabric slightly on both sides so that his car keys, coins, cigarette lighter, and his operational squadron coin and monogrammed metal golf ball markers jingled together

*Ka-ching, ka-ching, ka-ching.*

Snedd moved swiftly from the chair-side of his AOC desk to meet ‘Van’ where he stood. Between the carrier deck and the open doorway.

*Ka-ching, ka-ching, ka-ching, he did it again*

“You like drive my Porch-eeee,” he said in a faux Vietnamese



accent.

“Long time, short time, GI?” he added, staying just outside C3C Winnebago-Superbus’ personal bubble.

“Uh . . . no . . . uh, no sir!” he responded with ‘balls’.

Snedd was growing frustrated and fast. The Comm was expecting a report on this incident within the hour and the minutes were ticking away. He glanced at his Seiko, paused, then looked back at the three-degree still standing at attention.

“Okay Superbud,” he paused angrily for mispronouncing the cadet’s name. “Did you or did you not take a young Miss Arielle Thibault out to a drive-in movie last weekend?” he stopped abruptly. To characterize the accusation any further may obfuscate all charges and render the query itself an ‘improper question’. To make matters worse, if Winnebago-Superbus did attempt to respond, he may have been caught in a web of what the honor and ethics wonks call a ‘double entendre’. These consist of a question that is unanswerable or an answer that is unknowable.

“Yessir, I did,” Superbus responded. “I will add in my own defense though, the fact that I never **intended** to take her to a drive-in movie at the time that I signed out on an off-duty pass.”

“A ha,” responded Snedd, “just as I thought, a quibbler!”

“Not so, sir,” said ‘Van, “act-ually,” he paused for effect. “Actually, I went to her home for the express purpose of firing up her decrepit Ford Galaxy 500.”

*Whaaaaaat?* thought Snedd. *There’s not a man alive that has the cojones to jump start that old ‘judgsicle’.*

Snedd moved in and pointed the bony finger of Nathan at 3C3 Winnebago-Superbus’ Adams apple and stopped short of actually making contact.

“Don’t you dare make claims that you’re not prepared to



and presented the rifle to the AOC for inspection.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh,” screamed Major Alex B. Sneddeker, running out of the office and down the hall towards the DMZ.



The inciting incident was, of course, the carefully orchestrated and chaperoned ‘date’ between C3C Ivan T. Winnebago-Superbus from Tysons Corner, Virginia, and Mademoiselle Arielle M. A. Thibault from Vélizy-Villacoublay, France.

C1C Leisure was made to sit out in the Harmon Hall foyer, until he was needed to provide eye-witness testimony in the Supt’s red leather inner-sanctum.

Both families were looking forward to ‘Van’s anticipated semester at l’ Ecole de l’Air in the fall.

The dowager cum chaperone admitted that she had been too tired to remain fully awake during as the evening-in-question drew on. During the outing that did in fact include catching a ‘show’ at the drive-in movie theater on Platte Avenue near Peterson Air Force Base.

“Mais oui,” she admitted during the question and answer session in the Super’s office with Miss ‘P’, le Général, the Superintendent, and Mademoiselle Thibault.

The frail woman who Mlle Arielle referred to as ‘tantie’ or ‘tata’ was energized now and rose to defend her charge as well as the handsome and dashing C3C Superbus. She wobbled slightly in her French ‘killer heels’ and Chanel lace cocktail

dress, wrap, and feathered 'church' hat.

Auntie' rose to her full four-feet-eleven-inches and shook her bony finger at the Supt.

"Je n'ai pas à me tracasser avec les details," she demanded. The tiny chaperone turned to her 'niece' and blessed her with an earnest "Vous êtes une bonne fille." Then she sat down and took a sip of PG Tips tea with lemon.

The Super looked around the room and signaled for his gatekeeper to dismiss 'Mister Leisure' who was waiting impatiently in an upholstered chair in one of the ante-rooms, and to ask the Catholic Chaplain (that he referred to as 'the Padre') to step inside and join us for 'tea'.

A muffled shout was heard outside the Supt's red-leather suites.

The Chaplain entered sporting his Pierre Cardin 'French cut' vestments and after conferring briefly with the Supt offered to 'take confession' from anyone present. The Supt offered his private and oak paneled 'salon' for this purpose.

The 'facts' of the case that drove the AOC to the mental health clinic, and C1C Leisure to attempt to get the Comm to place C3C Winnebago-Superbus on permanent 'house arrest' were hearsay at best. The Comm shook his head 'no', and Cadet Leisure would become noticeably unhinged once the hearing had ended.

"But sir," he pleaded, "Mister Superbus used the Airstream parked at the Fam Camp. The one he borrowed from the Squadron Faculty Officer."

The Comm looked out his plate glass window.

"I'm not," he insisted, ". . . going to bring Major Fritz into this and I want his name kept out of the transcript."

Cadet Leisure pouted and refused to acknowledge the Comm's directive.

"Mister Leisure . . ." the Comm said. "Mister Leisure, I'm not gonna fiddle fart around with you or any other cadet officer. I spent eighteen-months dodging bullets in 'Nam and I'm dang sure not gonna get fragged by one of your spit-grenades."

He caught his breath . . . "save that for one of your errant classmates," he paused. "Do you get me Mister?" he barked.

Leisure popped to attention and responded with 'balls' "I get you sir!"

And that was that.

The investigation dribbled on for three weeks. There was no incriminating evidence brought forward.

C1C Leisure did depose the Manager of the Class-Six store (the one that doubled as a gas station at the Community center).

The Comm asked 'why?'

Cadet Leisure said that there was the matter of the 'fifth' of Old Bushmills Irish Whiskey.

"So what?" added the Comm looking up from the play list for the June Week parade. 'I have three, maybe four bottles of Old Bushmills Irish at my on-base quarters. One of them is cask-aged.'

"But sir," Cadet Leisure protested . . .

"I said, DROP IT, Mister Leisure, or by golly I'll have you drop for twenty at the Noon meal formation."

And that, ladies and gentlemen, was that!





# 1<sup>st</sup> INTERMISSION

## 8 BEER FEST

“BROADCASTING LIVE, from Oktoberfest in beautiful downtown München,” hollered C3C Grillo from a semi-erect posture inside the glass box.

“Jawohl! und willkommen zu einer weiteren sendung von Radiofrei München,” said Hans, the lederhosen-clad announcer sitting across from Grillo in the control room.

“Man, it’s crazy out there Hans,” Cadet Grillo annunciated into the broadcaster’s mike hanging from the control room ceiling like a black and silver tarantula. “Welllll-come one and all to the Kamp USAFA Third Looie reconnaissance mission and Air Force Safety Center road show, we’re jazzed to be here Hans and man oh man has this been a trip to write home about.”

Contagious enthusiasm was oozing from the Seegram Seven Maestro – Mister Grillo - wearing jeans, a tee shirt, Hush Puppies, and his trademark Loden hat pushed back.

Hans could barely contain himself as he mashed down on the microphone kill switch and asked “Was ist dieser ‘mann oh mann’ Herr Grillo?”

The AOC had once again been pressed into service by the Comm. After the debacle in Paris, the Director of Safety



wanted a smaller team from Seegram Seven to execute a do-over. This time to develop an entirely new suite of ninety-second safety minutes and to demonstrate good will between the officers and men of Kamp USAFA and the occupied territory of post-WWII West Germany.

The order of battle was plain and simple. No recreational vehicles of any kind. The Comm had caught an early wind of the international incident between the three-smoke in Seegram Seven and the daughter of the ambassador to the French-speaking province of Quebec.

To make matters worse, C3C Winnebago-Superbus was confined to his room during the small contingent's deployment and squadron exchange to Spangdahlem and Bitburg Air Bases. The side trip to München was for the sole benefit of the cadets in attendance from the cadet German Club that traditionally celebrated Oktoberfest at the Broadmoor Hotel and for the AOC's wife who was half-German. Grillo was a by-name request.

Two bodacious fräuleins with one-size-too-small bustieres backed into what was becoming a glass enclosed insane asylum. They were each hauling two massive two and one-half liter steins. All four steins sported the universally famous München Lion Crest emblem.

The inane banter continued between Grillo and Hans until the top of the hour with both DJs 'slewing the drooth' with swigs of Löwenbräu in between comedic rants and fits of hysteria. Prior to the station break, the AOC's handler appeared outside the control booth and looked at his Timex watch.

Within a few minutes the studio manager appeared next to the AOC and Mrs. Robinson. He was outfitted in black everything including a black beret, wired headset with boom

mike, and holding a wooden clipboard left over from WWII. Program schedules were attached to the board with a bulldog clip. He was a pretty cool cat and did not seem to get his knickers in a twist regardless of the programming crisis du jour.

Grillo saw the stage develop for what he knew would be a most salient safety minute for the superbly accurate and on-time West German radio audience. *Why didn't I summon Doggerty*, he thought, *Doggerty is slated to become the Seegram Seven Safety Cadet-NCO once the jets fly over the press box in June.*



The man in black was directing traffic outside the glass broadcast studio and silently tap-tap-tapping his clipboard to establish a rhythmic timetable that the studio worker-bees referred to as 'takt'. The studio manager's baton was the Parker T-ball Jotter that a contingent of Anheuser-Busch salesmen had presented him three or four Oktoberfests ago. The burden that was being carefully moved closer and closer to the entrance to

Grillo's and Hans' glass cage was an ancient and ornate Dezibelmessgerät or decibel meter that appeared to be a refugee from the Allied Raid on Dresden. Its paint job was a toasted seafoam green with splotches of golden brown around the base and on the corners. The left side of the beast appeared to have been sanded down to bare metal and repainted over what appeared to Grillo to be an embossed swastika that was barely visible as the team shifted the weight of the appliance.

The glass door was held open and the massive device inched closer and closer to the inner sanctum.

C3C Grillo grabbed the script and reviewed the impeccable notes from the Safety Center.

*Doggerty's fingerprints are all over this manuscript*, he thought.

**Safety Minute 64-0716. *Hearing Safety During Blitzkrieg Operations.***

Background: Höfbrau was founded by Wilhelm V, which explains why the international festival was perceived as a fun, safe, and slightly disorganized insane asylum.

From his seat behind the microphone, Grillo watched events unfold and scribbled notes for what would become a most nouveau-scientific safety minute thanks to the generosity of the broadcast executives who would evidently be presenting him an antique decibel meter. A white elephant for sure.

He whispered a question to Hans who mashed a series of buttons on his console and apparently energized and redirected a cohort of roadie-like studio laborers. Within a few minutes a parade of coverall-clad helpers began entering the studio carrying a various sized cardboard boxes that were delicate and aged but devoid of any sign of dirt or dust.

The first stagehand approached Hans carefully and with one hand held the bottom of the shoebox sized container and with

the other hand solemnly withdrew a Lugar pistol wrapped in grey tissue paper.

Hans nodded thoughtfully and turned toward Grillo as if to ask, 'What do you think?'

Grillo looked down at the Lugar that Hans was presenting, then behind him at the noise-level measuring behemoth that was nestled carefully against the interior glass wall of the studio.

Grillo smiled his signature smile and confidently replied "Ja, das ist das ticket".

Hans smiled broadly then released a gush of emotion as he pumped the pistol in the air and looked around at the stagehands who were smiling back at him.

For the next forty-five minutes the studio audience and the folks listening at home were treated to a parade of sounds that ranged from a diminutive kinder-toy 'pop' gun that registered a surprising forty decibels to a hundred year-old antique black powder rifle manufactured by Mauser's predecessor firm, and bearing the Königlich Württembergische Gewehrfabrik hallmark.

"Man-o-man Hans, that big bugger rang in at one hundred and twenty-three decibels. And that was with the muzzle half-way into the discharge barrel."

"Ja, das war ein großer batardo-sound," roared Hans into the broadcaster's mic hanging overhead.

The banter continued back and forth as two Luftwaffe officers with spit-shined boots fired each weapon directly into the steel center tube of a fifty-five gallon drum that was filled to three-quarters with an absorptive mélange of sand, wood chips, and plastic pellets of sufficient density to dissipate the energy of projectiles ranging from hand-made musket balls and minie balls to the obscure .275, .415, and the popular fifty-caliber

safari brass-case ammunition.

The studio manager tapped his clipboard to mete out a cadence for the gun bearers marching in and out of the impeccably clean glass, steel, and chrome broadcast studio.

Grillo settled down and gave the home audience a verbal picture of which weapon was being loaded, discharged, and handed back to the respective gun-bearer for the long march back to the studio armory for a thorough cleaning, oiling, and final resting place.

With each discharge Hans celebrated with a flurry of expletives in his native tongue, and a roar of laughter as the next weapon of slightly larger caliber was unveiled and presented handle- or butt-first to the uniformed officers.

Grillo's color commentary in English included the decibel-level registered by the behemoth, and a nod to Hans to follow with the German equivalent for the benefit of the listening audience.

Grillo also described the logarithmic nature of decibels and the hearing loss that would result from prolonged exposure to the nasty assault on the ear drums.

He dug deep and extracted a useful example for the studio and home audience that the 'one hundred and thirty decibels kicked out by the twenty-two caliber pistol and rifle', the ones that Hans referred to as 'chipmunk pistole' and 'chipmunk gewehr', would result in no hearing loss at all to the shooter as long as ear plugs or ear muffs were worn, and not too many shots were fired in quick succession.

Grillo added the easy-to-remember factoid that 'sixty decibels sound twice as loud as the fifty decibel noise generated by a loud radio, heavy machinery, or a rowdy kindergarten classroom'.

Tail-end Charlie ended the studio parade with a gold-plated

Colt .45 service revolver that registered just under 155 decibels and brought the anticipated ‘das ist gut’ nod of approval from the trigger man.

Hans moved back to his upholstered broadcaster’s chair and announced a station break.

The studio manager continued his tap-tap-tapping and followed the gun bearers out of the inner sanctum. The Luftwaffe followed, and the glass door remained open to allow the blue smoke and sulfur to escape into the hallways and offices surrounding the broadcast booth.

What happened next filled Grillo’s cup to overflowing.



Unbeknownst to the contingent from Kamp USAFA, the German army had been busily preparing a demonstration of their own, outside in the studio parking lot.

During the station break, Hans signaled for Grillo to follow him ‘mach schnell’ to the back of the studio complex to a loading dock that was eerily familiar to him somehow.

Let me say dear reader that what happened next was in no way an act of sabotage or a usurping of authority.

When Hans summoned Grillo to the backlot to witness a bombastic display of German pride delivered using handgun and rifle firepower, he was seated in a makeshift throne (made out of duct-taped FedEx boxes) on the loading dock. This was no joke. The people groups in and around the beer halls, the artists colonies, and including the Radiofrei München home audience all considered C3C Anton J. Grillo one of their very

own. Right down to his Loden hat casually pushed back to expose a little more ‘forehead’ than the average männlich mann would display.

C3C Grillo did it not in an ostentatious way, mind you. His was a display of unfettered confidence with a genuine love for the people groups that surrounded him. His broad smile filtered through his unauthorized and hastily grown moustache and told his studio audience all that they needed to know about their newfound friend.

Even the most respectful kinder would look at him at a book signing or street performance, turn toward their impeccably dressed mothers and ask “Ist er ein Deutscher, Mama?” Hoping for assurance that he was most certainly one of their own. And he was, of course. Not German by birth as they were, but German in that they had fully embraced *him*. And German in the way that he had fully surrendered to their adoption of the lion-hearted one as one of their very own.

“Ja, mein kind; er ist Deutsch,” was the only response rendered to the hopeful next generation.

The ostensible act of sabotage was in no way meant to signal a coup d'état – one Kamp USAFA leader unseating or ‘dethroning’ another of his countrymen. It may have looked like that but is was in no way.

It gave every appearance of political upheaval when, as soon as he was seated on the loading dock throne, Grillo and the throng that surrounded him were graced as it were by sounds emanating from the crystal clear Blaupunkt loudspeakers that were arrayed like the royal family’s trumpet line announcing the victorious return of the king and army or the birth of a royal heir.

As soon as Grillo and Hans evacuated the broadcast studio, which they assumed would remain ‘dark’ until their return;

sweet sounds of stringed instruments and the gentile warbling of scales – vocal scales – could now be heard over the outdoor speakers.

This meant only one thing. Someone, or a group of someones had violated the inner sanctum of the studio, control room, glassed-in broadcast booth, and all. And they had done it as quickly and with the confidence of Joshua's army capturing the ancient city of Ai.

For a moment all seemed lost. Lost that is until Cadet Grillo heard the familiar sound of C3C Charles d'Vine's bow being carefully drawn across the perfectly tuned 'D' string of the cello.

He relaxed as he eased himself into the back cushion of the loading dock FedEx box throne to attend to what would come next. As he did this, all standing in the back lot and on the loading dock turned to take their cue from Grillo who with eyes closed, was preparing to be transported into a state of supreme bliss with all those surrounding him.

None would be disappointed.





*Kamp USAFA Sunday*

*Standing on the river, the east bank of the Elbe,  
Lookin' 'cross Cologne, they move mach schnell,  
Mid-day sun slung low in the winter sky,  
A flight of Aardvarks crackle nigh, cracklin' nigh;*

*Gotta get back, back to Kamp USAFA soon;  
Feelin' so sad, like the man in the moon.  
(Cadet Chancel Choir refrain)*

*They're gonna light their burners, burn 'em bright,  
Gonna torch, gonna touch the night, so might  
They take me too, take me too; (pause) Gonna light their  
burners bright, gonna torch, torch the night, alright;  
(München Girls Choir refrain)*

*They're gone, me on the ground, cold, cold ground;  
Won't see 'em again in winter, not 'til springtime rolls around;  
Feelin' so cold and lonely, lonely me just sad and down,  
Better get myself a-movin', better get my aft to town.*

*Take me one, take me one day, make it real, USAFA Sunday,  
Make it one day, one day soon, make mine Sunday, Kamp  
USAFA, oooh hooo, oooh hooo.  
(Reprise)*

*Kamp USAFA Sunday*

Performed by the Cadet Chapel Quartet  
*(cello, harp, mandolin, and dulcimer)*

C1C Crispin "Kinch" Nasturtium on vocals  
*(Kinch's younger brother Timothy is a three-smoke in Seegram)  
(sung to the melody of Urge for Going by Joni Mitchell)*

Following the impromptu invasion of the sound studio and the command performance of Kamp USAFA Sunday, Grillo led the others on the loading dock and back lot in a standing ovation that was both reverent and respectful.

All eyes remained on Grillo as he stepped forward to within a foot of the edge of the loading platform. Mothers covered their children's eyes.

"My dear friends," he began without the assistance of a microphone, "I give you the Kamp USAFA safety roadshow." Then he took a bow on behalf of the invisible musicians and vocalist who had just graced the sprawling campus.

He turned toward the massive beer tent to his left, nodded, then announced "the only way that I can follow that," he paused, smiling ". . . is with a final ninety-second safety minute," he paused ". . . a magnum opus for such a time as this."

He signaled for Doggerty to step out from backstage and present the grand finalé.

In preparation for delivery and to 'center' his very being, C3C Doggerty dropped his head in a bow that might have been taken for a short prayer. Then he raised his head and delivered what many on this most historic Kamp USAFA Radio Road Show would count as his finest off-the-cuff safety minute delivered to a listening audience of more than seven hundred hearing his voice live, and as many as three million tuning in from home.

Thanks to the quick thinking of the AOC, Mrs. Robinson, and the obedience of the nubile Swiss virgins in waiting, every jot and tittle of Doggerty's presentation was captured for later publication in sacred journals into which the self-same nubile interns and yearlings were scribbling furiously.

***Safety Minute 64-0717. Beer Fest Safety, Tragedy in the Höfbrau Tent.***

Background: Hofbräu was founded by Wilhelm V, the Duke of Bavaria which explains why Hofbräu München was so popular. ‘Villy Boy’ the moniker bestowed by his royal drinking buddies, having a penchant for the look and feel of the letter ‘V’, in the same way that Kodak founder George Eastman preferred the letter ‘K’, was a go-getter of the highest form and fashion.

When the local swill was determined to be less than satisfactory for his Royal Family’s palate, he decided that it would be a good idea to venture into home brewing on a scale that was only possible if you had the necessary ‘juice’ that his benefactor Emperor Ferdinand II provided.

Adherence to the standard temperatures and pressures for fermenting and ‘kegging’ the new Weissbier was an exact science in the burgeoning sovereignty that coveted precision as the highest form of self-actualization.

Safety in brewing operations took a back seat to production schedules as the royal timekeepers tap-tap-tapped out a cadence on their royal clipboards to spur-on the brewers, tasters, and keggers to a level of production that would only be approximated by the Aussies. The German shop floor timekeeping referred to as ‘takt’ caught on big-time and was deemed far superior to the English method of ‘management through a raised eyebrow’.

Vilhelm’s claims to fame, or infamy, were three. First, he lost the bubble on safety and suffered a rash of keg explosions when he allowed his brewers to seek higher and higher levels of alcohol content in the new flavors they were producing. Second, it was rumored that he was dethroned by his patrón the Emperor, but in fact he was drawn into the unseemly world of

beer tent dwellers, having left his royal court in 1597 to embark upon a vision quest that you and I would just call a ‘bender’. In any case he was succeeded by his son Max the First and turned his attention to the finer arts of monopolizing the production and distribution of Weissbeir. It was much more fun than being a duke anyway, the latter being described as ‘boring’. His claim to fame then was the third and final contribution to the pages of history was the founding of Hofbräu München which involved the passing-along of the secret family recipes to his son who reigned ‘on high’ from time to time.

As mentioned earlier, Vilhelm sired a son with a golden palate named Maximillian I who was deemed fully capable of running the day-to-day operations of the dukedom. Each in their turn ‘moved the needle’ on quality and volume of production in a way that threatened the imbalance of power in western Europe. The ducal monopoly on Weissbeir almost bit them in the royal bum when the normally peace-loving flower power types known as the Swiss Army invaded München in 1632 and threatened to burn the place to the ground unless Max gave them a few kegs for their upcoming beer-ball festival.

Max’ timely response “Alles, was sie brauchte, war zu tun fragen.” was deemed more than deft statesmanship. It was emblazoned on steins and kegs as a friendly ‘sieg heil’ to all beer-quaffing neighbors. The Australians, the French, and yes, even the Swiss.

*All they needed to do was ask, he thought. We’ve given the same to university frat houses, stadiums full of spectators, and to the soup kitchens in the name of our patron the Emperor.*

Thank goodness that Wilhelm V was not around to witness the ceremonial surrender (of the beer, not the city); he had moved on to his eternal reward in 1626.

Let the records reflect that Vilhelm had indeed abdicated his

throne in 1597, although they make no mention of why. Let history show that his last day in office was Oktober fifteenth, 1597, and his career as a beer ambassador began the very next day. His son ruled in his stead and ‘pantsed’ the Swiss Army in ’32. That was indeed Maximilian’s finest hour.

The strategic flaw in the Hofbräuhaus philosophy was the typical over-emphasis on quality and production with a commensurate downplaying of safety. This would plague the early beer-fests and newly birthed Oktoberfests, but the unintended negative consequences would plague western Europe for centuries.

Besides the harmless ‘pantsing’ and the thing that noble Germans refused to acknowledge in mixed company (peeing in the bushes), the birth of state-sponsored beer festivals fostered a list of activities that required mothers to ‘rush their kinder to Saint Vincent’s’.

Diplomatic correspondence nearly two centuries later confirmed reports that this ‘horseplay’, as it was described by members of John Quincy Adams’ contingent, had achieved a catastrophic level of bad judgement.

The first and most lethal activity was the practice of beer tent entertainment that the West Germans referred to as ‘Booster Shots’. Always big fans of conquering lands deemed ‘ripe for the harvest’, Maximilian’s descendants showed marked preference for the more physical demonstrations of power and strength. ‘Restraint’ as a self-imposed limitation was not found in the lexicon, nor was it part of the common vernacular.

‘These booster shots,’ as it was described by emissaries reporting back to the Emperor, ‘. . . represent one of the more foolhardy displays of recreation in all the land. It is far more grave than the mere ‘horseplay’ described by the naïve and raucous American colonists.’

Not prone to understating the seriousness of the unruly behavior that found its origin in the beer tents, the Emperor's court commissioned the Imperial Lexikograph to coin a new word that would accurately denote the gravity of these practices, while leaving ample margin for a wide array of connotations. The term that was carefully shaped and presented on an engraved tablet of gold weighing thirteen kilograms for His Grace's consideration was 'Dummy-Verfahren'.

'Ja, Dummy-Verfahren,' was his response.

And as it was in 1633, so it remains that 'Dummy Procedure' is the ubiquitous term that reflects all that is wild and reckless in the performance of senseless acts of barbaric amusement.

Once the train left the station, the Imperial Taxonomists went to work to codify the stunts to be included in the list of foolish practices. Not 'verboten' per se, just not encouraged.

These included:

**.001 – Booster Shots;** the senseless and irresponsible activity of launching a member of the species into the air using only the spring-power of a confederate endowed with bountiful quadriceps. To accomplish this end, the more powerful perpetrator will lie on his back on the ground or elevated platform and present the bottoms of his feet as a 'seat' for the subject that will be launched. Once the subject is fully seated, the 'launcher' will allow his legs to flex to lower the subject into the pre-launch position. Then, the 'booster' will powerfully and violently extend his legs to launch the subject into the air. The booster shot typically ends with the subject picking himself up, dusting himself off, and getting back in line for another 'ride'. On occasion, the subject's mother is summoned and compelled to rush her injured son to Saint Vincent's Hospital to be attended to by an emergency room physician.

Other codified elements included:

**.002 – Razbanyas;** the senseless and irresponsible act of jumping into the swimming pool as closely as possible to the targeted subject without actually making contact. Collateral damage: subjects injured when the perpetrator of the stunt scores a direct hit or glancing blow that results in concussion, broken limbs, drowning, or incapacitation.

**.003 – Firing of Projectiles** in an unofficial capacity. This reprehensible act includes repurposing ordinary household items to launch other ordinary household items into the air or across the main ballroom at the Luftwaffe Officers Club. The classic example is the Danish tennis ball cannon, made with an iron tennis ball container, and used to fire a tennis ball across the room. The Danes perfected this art by drilling a small hole in the base of the tube, pouring a dram of Aquavit into the tube, then dropping the tennis ball into the tube. They take careful aim and touch a burning match to the hole at the bottom of the tube. The ‘whump’ heard precedes the violent ejection of the tennis ball from the tube. Collateral damage: direct hit on a china cabinet, trophy case, or Luftwaffe Commander’s wife entering the ballroom to ask, ‘What the schnell is going on in here?’

**.004 – Pyrotechnics;** the senseless and deliberate act to ignite spectacular displays of combustion on the ground or into the air for the purpose of entertaining the masses large or small. The danger of unlicensed public displays of combustion is the tendency of competing groups to try to eclipse the demonstration just witnessed with a display that is more violent, more beautiful, and more frightening to the subjects. Collateral damage: the unintended ignition or vaporization of one or more spectators.

**.005 – The Slide for Life,** more accurately referred to by its detractors as The Slide of Death. This act involves having a

merchant seaman or a party youth splice sections of rope together produce a length suitable for traversing the distance between large trees in an open field or, on occasion, spanning the gulf between two buildings in the city. The subject is suspended from a pulley-and-trapeze apparatus attached to the rope spanning the gulf. In the best of cases the subject is graced by an exhilarating ride from the high anchor point of the rope to the low anchor point at the opposite side of the gulf. Collateral damage: severe bodily harm when the rope breaks, the subject crashes into the tree or building at the end of the ride, he falls from the trapeze, or is pushed by an impatient neighbor as he leans forward to grasp the trapeze at the beginning of the ride.

**.006 – ‘Accidental’ Discharge** of firearms in- or out-of-doors. The fine legal point here is that Imperial subjects are mandated not to fire weapons indoors, while out-of-doors shooting is permitted only for the gentry and for members of the lower caste who have obtained a legal hunting license for the season. For this reason, and to eliminate an inordinate amount of time wasted in the courts, the Emperor has deemed that all non-sanctioned discharges will be characterized as ‘accidental’. ‘No harm, no foul,’ as he was wont to say. The problem with accidental discharges in and around the beer tents, is that the perpetrators fire off way too many rounds and care not a whit what is hit in the process. Collateral damage: grievous bodily harm, damage to property and livestock, and the felony offense of alcohol abuse when a stein or keg becomes the unlikely target of the projectile.

“So, you can tell,” Doggerty concluded, “. . . they still have a long way to go regarding safety.”

He paused.



“They’ve been doing it this way for centuries, but I think that the winds of change are starting to rustle the foliage. I think they are going to invite us back for a strategic planning session.”

He paused.

“Not for beer or brewing, I think they’ve got that covered. For safety and the most coveted gift of all. The gift of a Kamp USAFA Seminar on the art and science of the ninety-second safety minute.”

Grillo paused and reached down to lift the massive stein.

“Let’s toast our hosts as we pledge to return to München,” Grillo said as he lifted the stein in preparation, “. . . hear, hear, to our host . . . prosit!”

Then he and all present quaffed deeply and their eyes met.

The visitors’ minds drifted back to their home. They were longing for the hallowed halls of Seegram Seven, but they had miles remaining before this itch could be scratched.



## 9 PROPHECY

THE NSA which many cold war policy wonks jokingly referred to as ‘No Such Agency’ was common knowledge now.

Grillo and Lapinski (both formerly of Double Deuce; grads of CS-07) had completed their active duty service commitments and were both flying for the Allegheny Airlines. Few knew that in a month, they would be wearing US Airways badges and bus-driver hats. It would be five years before airline pay would achieve parity for the new recruits.

Lapinski was working his side-hustle selling Amway Queen waterless cookware at the BX on weekends, but Grillo wanted more. Lapinski had hoped that he and Grillo could have launched a start-up business like Rich DeVos and Jay Van Andel did at the completion of the second world war. That was not to be.

Grillo reached out to Stardust, Spiggott, Zawicki, and Speedwagon who had remained on active duty at ‘garden spots’ in the UK and western Europe. During a ‘wet’ reconnaissance mission to the new Giuseppe’s Depot restaurant and bar for the fifth Class of ’75 reunion, Grillo got the distinct impression that Stardust and Spiggot were USAF intel ‘spooks’ by virtue of their

‘early seventies’ haircuts. It was already known that Zawicki and Speedwagon were computer hacking experts and home-brew computer club members since they used their ‘blue chip’ educational deferment after graduation to attend Stanford University and get advanced degrees in comp sci.

For the rest of the Seegram Seven grads, Newbeck was flying for the fledgling Federal Express that would be renamed FedEx by its customers. This was a common practice also witnessed by wing commanders who preferred that the ‘Base Fitness Centers’ not be renamed the ‘Gym’.

Fogarty left after three-degree year to start as an NFL offensive lineman for the Detroit Lions. Boyle had dropped out when the Vietnam war started winding down and became a client-centered psychotherapist in La Jolla.

Doggerty and Sweeney (originally from Dirty Thirty; proud grads of Seegram Seven) were both F-111 Ops Officers. Doggerty at RAF Upper Heyford. Sweeney at Cannon Air Force Base.

McSchwartz was elevated to the top leadership position at B’nai B’rith International following his completion of his active duty service commitment and conversion from Catholicism to Judaism.

O’Bannon had joined the Army to be a veterinarian.

Nasturtium married an heiress from Dubai and was reported to be building an indoor ski slope in that Emirate. Of greater interest to the reporter from the Wall Street Journal was the report that General of the Army Francisco Caesar Nasturtium was an Air Force Academy graduate and was anointed the Commander of the Army of the Air – Dubai. His annual budget was unlimited and he commanded a fleet of 23 Piper Cub tow planes and a variety of Schweitzer SGS 1-26 single seaters, and SGS 2-32 and 2-33 multi-seat sailplanes

manufactured in and exported from Elmira, New York.

Once granted an honorable discharge from active duty, Air Force Captain Philip J. Kalalabad from Traverse City, Michigan converted to the Rosicrucian sect and began a world-wide shower singing ministry. He changed his name of course. His new name was Reverend Ali Kalalabad.

Gahenna and Weirnam had completely disappeared from the public eye.

Captain Charles d'Vine also adopted the same mantle of the penultimate safety wonk that Grillo and Doggerty were already channeling - starting at Kamp USAFA and continued while on active duty. As with many other consultant/entertainers that adopted a musical icebreaker, d'Vine took up the cello as the instrument that he would play on stage when imparting wit and wisdom about safety and the avoidance of 'dummy procedures'.

Smurtsburgher became the U.S. Postmaster in Homer, Alaska and offered to host a Seegram Seven summer all-night golf festival.

Edgar Allan Poe IV became a Hollywood producer and director, and vehemently denies that he had discovered the vast fortune of gold bullion and Spanish coins stashed in Baltimore by his namesake.

Cognos, François, and Winnebago-Superbus were knighted by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of France. The pastoral arrondissement clerks refused to add the noble title 'Le Chevalier' before their names. Word on the street was that all three were going to help the French commission the greatest air force in the world and change the official ICAO language of the air to French.

It was Winnebago-Superbus of course that attended l'Ecole de l'Air while a second-class cadet at Kamp USAFA. The fact remains that by recruiting a couple of avid Francophiles from

his Kamp USAFA class to launch the worlds greatest air force he was almost assured of securing the Legion d'Honneur for himself and knighthood for all three.

Zugspitze had retired to his family farm in Salinas, Kansas (ostensibly to look for 'the girl'). He took a position as assistant professor of psychology teaching four sections of neurolinguistic programming to Psych majors at Bethany College. The following year he received the chairman's approval to add a phrenology class for graduating seniors. Then he disappeared from Lindsborg and reappeared in Topeka months later with the pretty blonde that he had seen on the stage in Arnold Hall when he was a doolie. He had apparently reached out to the infamous 'ghost' of Fairchild Hall to help him find her wherever she was. The 'Z-man' found her, married her, filled their 'quiver' with kids, and the rest was history.

Bartholomew X. Taylor (from Paso Robles, California) completed his active duty commitment as a fuels officer and launched what would become the greatest consortium of vineyards in the whole world. Sounds like he picked up a few 'tips and techniques' from the old country. He too visited Paris as a civilian and managed to sweep the blindfolded wine tasting competitions – reds and whites.

For sure, all were all part of the original ADVON team that made sure that l'Ecole de l'Air was suitable for their fellow 'yellow tag'. Good thing too, because the French people developed a strange affinity for 'les hommes de Seegram Seven'.



The event that brought Grillo more than just fifteen minutes of fame and tied him inexorably to Doggerty who would be presented to the world at the International Safety Congress in New Lanark, Scotland.

Yes, Grillo's photo-shopped image would grace the cover of Time magazine. Yes, the current and former god-squad members would coo and awe over his past whistles and taunts. They would assure each other in their pencil skirts and high heels that Grillo had indeed been in one of those fast jets that pulled up sharply abeam the southeast chapel mount. 'Yes', they agreed, 'he even turned his helmet and looked in our direction just before he started the steep climb.'

Yes, Doggerty would be assigned to lead the accident board, a by-name request from the Director of Air Force Safety in New Mexico. Yes, both would 'recruit' their old falcon buddies from Seegram to each get a measure of fame or fortune alongside their classmates.

The event itself was smothered beneath the glitz and glamor of paparazzi flashbulbs and half-naked European women planting kisses and pressing into our heroes with voluptuous bouquets of flowers. The scene resembled the first-place finish of the Tour de France experienced by the Third Looie reconnaissance contingent and ADVON tour back in '73.

What was lost on all but the most experienced military aviators was "What in the world were Grillo and Lapinski (both US Airways pilots with two-weeks of seniority), and Stardust, Spiggott, Zawicki, and Speedwagon (all active duty junior officers or CIA assets) doing on a Lockheed Constellation flying out of Paris enroute to Oktoberfest?"

The farm boys at Langley had erased just about everything regarding the mission save for an apparently unobtrusive Air Force safety minute that was published by the Director of

Safety at Kirtland Air Force Base. The author of course was below-the-zone Air Force major-select Chance P. Doggerty from Worcester, Massachusetts. Grillo and his cohort had been feeding him reports of inflight emergencies and mid-air disasters for more than five years now.

***Safety Minute 64-0716. Inflight Emergencies, Mayday Operations to Protect Souls on Board.***

The Super Connie's No. 2 engine failed forty-one minutes after the takeoff from Paris. The flight plan issued by French air traffic control would carry Grillo and his flight crew on an east-north-east heading for overflight of Luxembourg City at flight level 220 followed by a handoff to Rhine Control, a turn to the southeast, and a slight decent to flight level 210 enroute to the Oktoberfest. Plans were dashed with the engine failure, so the Flying Tiger pilot and co-pilot trimmed the craft to eliminate yaw, advise air traffic control, and squawked 'emergency' on the IFF.

The quick thinking Grillo mashed the mic button and declared an in-flight emergency with Orly air traffic control.

"Ahhhh Orly Radar, Flying Tiger November-six-niner-one-five-charlie, mayday, mayday, number two engine failure."

"Ahhhh Roger, Flying Tiger November-six-niner-one-five-charlie, Orly Radar; copy you inflight emergency, quesque c'est votre intentions . . . what are your intentions?"

"Ahhhh Orly Radar, Flying Tiger request heading and altitude deviations, request handoff to Rhine Control for emergency recovery . . . . ahhhh, standby one."

Quick thinking in the cockpit revealed that it would be ill-advised to continue on to Munich. The runway and repair facilities would be adequate, but the advent of Oktoberfest on the morrow would limit the number of sober airframe and power plant mechanics available to remove and replace the

failed engine.

*Good idea to request a handoff to Rhine, thought the pilot-in-command. The French Air Force seized the control towers and traffic control facilities back in June. Don't want to piss off the Union any more than we have to (chuckle, chuckle).*

“The airdrome at Frankfurt is a comer, and we can probably get a cracker jack flugzeugmechaniker from the Yank air base at Wiesbaden,” suggested Lapinski, the co-pilot.

“Bring up the HF radio and ask Los Angeles if they have an engine in West Germany. Ike was here in a ‘Connie’ a few years back. I’ll bet that they made Lockheed fill a hangar with spare parts (chuckle, chuckle),” said Grillo.

“Roger, switching to high frequency,” said Lapinski.

The seasoned ‘trash haulers’, both air force veterans, knew that as the Cold War dragged on Europe was plagued with old and disused airfields – some with dirt runways unsuitable for a modern post-war commercial fleet that included the graceful and elegant ‘Connie’.

Closed airports and aviation depots with inadequate repair facilities were also part of the problem. And of course, the French air traffic controllers’ walkouts fully sanctioned by the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail. Turning left and hacking the aircraft clock after a handoff to Bitburg Radar. Grillo elected to continue straight ahead to Frankfurt for an emergency recovery and landing.

*Bitburg? Thought Lapinski. Maybe we can stop in for a Bitburger (chuckle, chuckle).*

What became obvious to the flight crew was that the remaining three engines were beginning to overheat. The ex-military pilot and co-pilot took turns gently tapping the circular glass windows over the three ‘good’ exhaust gas temperature gauges. The stubborn needles had already moved from green to



yellow. Now they were threatening to move from yellow to red.

Having declared an emergency, the pilot requested an enroute descent to Frankfurt in an effort to throttle back the two starboard engines to reduce fuel consumption and lower the exhaust gas temperatures. Several minutes later the No. 3 engine caught fire and began filling the Lockheed's cabin with black smoke.

Zawicki dashed to the cockpit entrance, knocked forcefully and pushed the door open.

"We've got smoke and fumes in the main cabin gents, recommend you dump cabin pressure most riki-tik and start an emergency descent to below ten-thousand feet," Zawicki said.

As he spoke to Grillo and Lapinski on the flight deck he sensed a hand placed gently on his shoulder. Following his report to the Captain he turned as if to ask a question.

It was then that he saw the stewardess wilting like a flower. Her hand dropped to her side, her knees buckled, and Zawicki caught the swooning beauty lest she be injured in the fall.

Grillo turned right and observed the passion play in progress.

"You've got the aircraft," Grillo said to Lapinski. "We have a situation in the back."

"Ahhhh roger, Captain, I have the aircraft," said Lapinski glancing over his left shoulder to see exactly what was up.

Zawicki caught her head in the palm of his hand and scooped her up by her waist. Her legs, lean thighs, and buttocks hung suspended and weightless off the main cabin floor thanks to the support that Zawicki was providing her neck and lower back. Her blue pill box stewardess hat fell and rolled in circles to a stop on the passenger aisle at Zawicki's feet. As the hat fell, it withdrew a wispy strand of long auburn hair that hung fetchingly between heaven and earth. Her slender arms hung straight down from her shoulders, still cloaked in her

uniform top, a Lolita Lempicka blue silk zip-up uniform jacket with black trim and diminutive Flying Tigers epaulettes. Her mid-length uniform pencil skirt held her legs in a modest pose with knees together, and with calves and ankles perpendicular to the cabin floor. Her towering heels in black patent leather remained on her feet and the soles and heels of the shoes made gentle contact with the carpeted walkway. Zawicki exercised great care to preserve her dignity as he moved her delicate frame as quickly as possible to the luxury of a first-class seat nearest the bulkhead. Grillo licked his lips. With Flying Tiger pillows and blankets from the overhead compartment, Grillo ensured that she would remain warm and comfortable until the in-flight emergency concluded with a safe landing.

*This Super Constellation should already be cleared for a straight-in and full stop landing,* Snedd thought looking over at his wife.

The risk of shock-related trauma was significant although the vents were now pushing ice cold ambient air into the cabin. The black smoke had dissipated in a matter of seconds.

*Better call for emergency medical personnel to meet the aircraft when we land and taxi clear of the active runway,* Zawicki thought.

Mrs. Robinson observed the lightning-quick response of Zawicki and Grillo and watched in awe as the 'Z-man' moved the nubile stewardess to a safe place of solace.

*Others might have copped a feel or stolen a kiss,* she thought. *I will lock this memory away in my heart for future reference.*

The Frankfurt runway was already closed for the Super Connie's emergency arrival as response vehicles swarmed the taxiways and access roads with lights flashing. The in-flight emergency was closed without further incident and there was no loss of life.

Doggerty paused and looked up at the vast audience assembled for this years' international safety congress.

*Good boy*, thought the Director of Safety. *You've got 'em by the short and curlies. Go ahead, go ahead. Do it!*

Without hesitation and without being prompted, the below-the-zone major cum safety evangelist began to 'process' the content of the safety minute that he had just delivered.

"Alright," Captain Daggerty began without clearing his throat, "Let's review the evidence in the accident report and find a few 'golden nuggets' that we can present to the safety board."

*First*, the pilot and co-pilot fulfilled their emergency procedures mandate to maintain aircraft control, analyze the situation, and take proper action. Or did they? (He paused, baiting the audience for a response.) Let's take a look at the Tactical Pilotage Chart for the area. We know from the incident report that they were on a flight plan to Munich when the No. 2 engine failed. *Right here*, Daggerty thought as he pointed to the map projected on to the massive screen. They were under the control of Rhine Radar with a request for emergency recovery at Frankfurt Main. *But lookie here*, the major-select thought, *they were busy to be sure, but could have easily transitioned to a straight in full stop landing at Spangdablem Air Base.* An immediate descent and switch-over to Spang' Radar would have allowed a throttle-back to mid-range RPM and may have prevented an overheat of the No. 3 engine bearings – that's what the safety board determined was the cause of the fire. So, the take-away is simple, and we won't indulge in second guessing the pilots, their assets were on fire and we're safe and sound here in New Lanark (chuckle, chuckle).

*Second, don't let paralysis of analysis put a twist in your knickers.* "Recommendation . . ." Daggerty began. ". . . when an unanticipated event happens while drilling holes through the air, hack your aircraft clock. This will give you a temporal basis for

analyzing the situation and help you keep up with the ticking clock. It's a good idea to dial up the company headquarters or even the engineering office at the manufacturing plant if time is on your side. On round-the-world trips also remember that time zones come into play. It may be high Noon in New Delhi, but the aerospace engineers in Dallas are still in bed and won't hear the phones ringing off the hook in their offices at Lockheed."

*Third*, always remember that there are old pilots and there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots (chuckle, chuckle). So, don't press your luck, experience in the air will throw you your fair share on inflight emergencies, incidents, and accidents. Sounds like a country and western song, doesn't it (chuckle, chuckle).

I like to remember what my first flight instructor told me to never forget: 'don't fly in the clouds, don't fly at night, and don't mess about with the red-guarded switches.' (chuckle, chuckle)

So that's enough for today's safety minute. Does anyone have any questions? *Okay, you in the back.*

*Independent study (extra credit). Carry this accident report around in your pilot's map case and let it gnaw away on you until your curiosity gets the better of you. Conduct your analysis by chair-flying the mission and summarize your findings for the annual safety conference.*

June 19, 1947: Pan Am Flight 121 (NC88845, Clipper Eclipse), crashed near Al Mayadin, Syria on a flight originating in New York and making its inaugural westbound flight of round-the-world service. The aircraft's No. 1 engine failed halfway on a leg from Karachi, Pakistan to Istanbul, Turkey. Due to closed airports and inadequate repair facilities, the pilot chose to continue to its destination. Several hours later, the remaining engines overheated and the No. 2 engine caught fire

and ultimately separated from the aircraft, necessitating a crash landing near Habbaniya RAF Station on Iraq/Syria border at about 01:40L. Probable cause of the accident was a fire which resulted from an attempt to feather the No. 2 (port inboard) propeller after the failure of the No. 2 engine thrust bearing. Fourteen of the 36 people on board were killed.

As Doggerty stepped off the stage, the audience rose for a standing ovation and the Director of Safety congratulated himself quietly. The roar from the crowd was deafening and lasted a full seven minutes.

Homage to Seegram Seven squadron? Probably not, but it was a full seven minutes all the same.

A glimpse into the future is a mysterious activity and sometimes a curious art. This is as much as we can hope to see and perhaps all that we can reveal at such a time as this.

Of a truth, the current events unraveling in real time back at Kamp USAFA warrant our full attention.

Were it not for the legendary Kamp USAFA optimistic hope for the future and knowledge in our heart of hearts that all will end well, we may be prone to declare the current goings-on in Seegram Seven a complete and total disaster.

Here's what I mean.



## 10 STARDUST II

THE DOD regulations were clear. Kamp USAFA Cadets, members of the media, celebrities, and elected officials in the community were authorized to take an incentive ride if approved by the Deputy Commander for Operations and rubber-stamped by the Peterson Air Force Base Wing King.

“You’ve got the takeoff,” boy-Colonel Adam Carter, USAF said to Cadet Third-Class Anton J. Grillo. “I’ll take the landing at Kodiak.”

“I’ve got the aircraft,” said Grillo, twirling the joystick and kicking the ‘rudders’. *Just like the T-33 Stardust ride*, he thought. *Not . . . so . . . much*, he pondered.

“You’ve got the aircraft,” Colonel Carter confirmed, as he threw another log on the fire and pushed the cockpit air toward the windscreen.

The aircraft - seventy-five feet, four inches long, with a service ceiling of eighty-nine thousand feet. Colonel Carter from Ogunquit, Maine and Cadet Anton J. Grillo from Avondale, Arizona are in the 100K club. Engineers claimed that the pressure suits were only certified to ninety thousand feet. With a leak, they confirmed, the pilots’ blood would boil.

The cockpit is a two-seater, side-by-side – not tandem, and looks like the nose of the Concorde, as it dips eighteen degrees for takeoff and landing. The cockpit is nineteen feet and one inch long and has redundant everything.

The cockpit is a fully enclosed lifting body with downward sloping canards and a fin that incorporates the HF, UHF, and Iridium antennae. In an emergency, the cockpit separates from the fuselage and can be flown to an unimproved landing strip for a forced landing. The canards become the main landing skids.

Behind the cockpit and inside the fuselage are the two centerline thrust turbofans, hydraulics, internal fuel tanks, and a centerline ramjet for operations above fifty-thousand feet. The fuselage picks up where the cockpit leaves off. It is a monocoque design, fifty-six feet and three inches long – all ceramic – poured in Ithaca, New York. The shell of the fuselage is extremely light and you can smash it with a sledgehammer and it rings like a bell, but will not break.

The wing root emerges eleven-feet and three inches behind the red vertical cockpit sever-line marked CAUTION – EXPLOSIVE BOLTS.

The wing root supports two ‘stubby’ wings that swing from zero to eighty-three degrees – nearly perpendicular – from the fuselage centerline for takeoff and landing. The leading-edge slats, blown flaps, and vectored thrust allow takeoffs at sixty-seven knots calibrated airspeed – fully fueled. For landings, the Dash-1 calls for seventy-two knots with a full fuel load – five knots for ‘insurance’. At minimum fuel, the SF-3 ‘Screamer’ touches down at fifty-two knots, typically forty-two knots groundspeed in a ten-knot headwind.

During operational testing, a Detachment 5 crew landed the Screamer on a general aviation runway that was nineteen-

hundred feet long, and twenty-five feet wide. The tiny airport had an ops center with a hotline to the FAA, a windsock, a fax machine for weather, and an attached diner that served the best pancakes, fresh-ground coffee, and applewood-smoked bacon in the county. A DoD official read the test report and asked why they used *that* runway for testing the new space fighter.

For medium-altitude operations the wings tuck back at eighteen degrees for max range cruise. Above fifty thousand feet, the wings sneak back to between fifty-seven and seventy-three degrees for ramjet operations. The fuselage performs like a lifting body and helps the wings lift the craft. Full wingspan measures out at seventy-three feet, six inches; fully tucked wingspan measures thirty-two feet, nine inches.

The mini turbofans each generate just over fourteen thousand pounds of thrust in military power, more than three times that in reheat. The ramjet's thrust and fuel type are classified, but it sips fuel and can power the craft in excess of Mach 4 - the top speed is classified.



“You’re cleared for unrestricted climb above flight level five-zero-zero, deviations authorized,” squawked the controller at Denver Center.

“Tiger seven-seven, cleared unrestricted climb,” Colonel Carter said, then turned and looked at his reflection in Grillo’s face mask.

“Roger, Tiger seven-seven,” have a safe flight.

“Thanks Denver, Tiger seven-seven,” Carter rasped.



With a modicum of instruction, Grillo raised the nose to thirty degrees with reheat cooking at maximum thrust, then rolled inverted and let the nose drop ten degrees, then completed the roll. He maintained a twenty-degree nose high climb and reset the altimeter at flight level one-eight-zero. He called passing one-eight, dropped the nose, and let the horses run through the Mach. Next he brought the nose up to thirty degrees and lit the ramjet and throttled the turbofans back to min burner. The blue dome overhead started to ‘crown’ and reveal the black of space. The crown grew until black filled the windscreen and everything below the railing was smoky white with the occasional glimmer of the Pacific Ocean on the port side.

“How . . . the . . . heck . . . did you know how to do that Mister?” smiled Colonel Carter behind his oxygen mask.

Grillo wiggled in his seat and beamed with pride.

“Dunno sir,” blurted Grillo, “. . . j’us say I just get all the time I can in the T-37 link in Fairchild Hall.” Grillo was nervous but proud to have impressed the ‘boy’ Colonel.

“I see . . .” said Carter with a measured tone. “Don’t suppose you’d like to break into outer space . . . would you?”

*Daymn*, thought Grillo. *Don’t mind if I do.*

“Ahhhhh, sir . . . . yes, sir!” piped up Grillo. “Yessirrrr-eeee.”

On the fast climb-out, Carter did the pressure check – twice – and told Grillo that he was cleared to join the ‘club’. They did, he did, and then they began the enroute descent and preparation for landing at Kodiak Island.

When young First Lieutenant Adam Carter – call sign ‘the Kid’ - was flying jets in Europe, Kodiak Island was the proposed site for Spaceport Alaska. Top Secret back then, then

Secret, then SBU, then Unclassified. That was some time ago. Kodiak provided the ideal location with one exception – the runway was too short. The runway is not any longer today, but the aircraft are completely different now. The Herc could always land here and did. Then the C-17. Then the fighters and fighter bombers.

Now the Screamer. As the SF-3 lined up on short final, Grillo called “Tiger seven-seven, final, full stop,” and was cleared to land. Then he turned to Colonel Carter and said, ‘going manual,’ as he depressed the paddle switch with his pinkie and took manual control for the final approach and full stop landing. Carter called ‘three green’ and ‘one hundred-feet’ on the radar altimeter . . . shook the joystick . . . and said, “I’ve got the aircraft.”

Grillo let go and mimicked, “You’ve got the aircraft,” like he was taught to say for the T-33 Stardust mission to Albuquerque.

From Grillo’s seat, stuff happened really fast. He had flown the takeoff, enroute portions of the flight, and lined up on short final. *Carter let me make the radio calls too*, he thought.

Colonel Carter eased the upwind main onto the porous surface runway like a butterfly with a sore foot – it squeaked and let out a puff of white smoke. He held the downwind main off the surface just long enough to make the point, then eased it onto the runway with the same precision. He held the nose up to aero brake – standard for the manual landing – then eased the nose wheel to the surface and turned toward the parking ramp at twenty-seven knots.

*The fact of the matter*, Grillo thought, *is that these damn things can land themselves*. “Nice one,” he said.

“Thanks,” said Colonel Carter.

*Showoff*, thought Grillo.

Grillo had cracked the code on what makes an Air Force officer and fighter pilot a stud. Last year, when he returned to Avondale, Arizona just before Christmas, to give a speech to the high school juniors and seniors he felt like a stud. The principal, faculty, and staff all stood and gave him a standing ovation. Not for the off-the-cuff speech, mind you. They gave him applause for having been the first in Avondale to take to the sky. Sure, there was a resident that went to West Point, but that was back in the 1880s.

*Gotta own it*, thought Grillo. *Gotta own it and make it real.*

And then there was the invitation to ‘hang’ with the VFW and ‘ride’ with the American Legion back home. These guys were awesome. Beer was a nickel a glass, but Grillo drank for free.

And these things *can* land themselves, they both knew that. Still, the FAA requires pilots to maintain takeoff and landing currency. Colonel Carter is current for landings. If he were a rated pilot on active duty, Grillo would get the landing on the return trip. He knew that in his heart of hearts. He lusted for it and could taste it in his spit. *I’m gonna do whatever it takes to become a knight of the air like Carter*, Grillo thought. *Gonna do it.*

Colonel Carter continued the taxi at twenty-five knots and exited the blue-lined main taxiway for the mountain shelter – the doors were opening now – the crew chief was signaling for straight ahead taxi with the lit wands. It was still civil twilight, but the sun had dropped behind the mountain hours ago. The mountain shelter was fully illuminated – a giant hangar carved out of granite with forty-foot ceilings, industrial lighting, and giant exhaust fans that pumped the fumes out of the hangar and downwind over the water.

As he rolled forward, Carter bumped the throttle to eighty percent, then chopped the throttle on the number one engine.

He ‘goosed’ the throttle for the number two engine, and pulled forward until the crew chief spotted him, signaled ‘forward’ and re-checked the tires, then signaled ‘stop’ with the wands. Carter passed the crew chief the nose gear pin over the left side and revved the number two engine for shut down. He checked to make sure that the emergency generator, hydraulics, and O2 generator kicked on – then off again at five percent RPM.

“Checks good,” yelled Carter as he unhooked his oxygen mask and turned toward Grillo. The overhead exhaust fans screamed and the hangar doors began closing.

“I’ll do the walk-around,” said Carter. “You got the B-4 Bags?”

“Got ‘em,” said Grillo.

The flight was just ‘a quick jet to Litch’ as they called it – a term that was passed down from an ancestor. Any trip that required you to hurry up to get somewhere – to ‘Litch’ – so you could turn right around and get back to where you started from was ‘a quick jet to Litch’. Colonel Carter and Cadet Grillo would indeed complete a quick jet to Litch. The flight plan back to ‘Pete’ was already on file.

As soon as the number two engine was shut down, two black Escalades inched forward toward the side door of the hangar. Carter and Grillo emerged from the hangar exit door and jumped into the second vehicle and the ground team loaded their pilots’ gear into the boot. Both Escalades drove across the airfield in ‘formation’ and the trailing vehicle peeled to the right and carried Carter and Grillo toward the heliport with the Bell Jet Ranger being made ready for a short flight.

The Jet Ranger with the navigation lights illuminated, would take Carter and Grillo to the planned meeting of the tribal chiefs. Colonel Carter they knew, Grillo they did not. Both would be welcome. The Ranger’s door slid shut and

Carter and Grillo quickly shed the flight gear. Both uniforms smelled like metal with a strong whiff of kerosene and sweat, and each flight suit sported salt-stained pits and a moist back.



The Ranger dusted off in the darkening twilight. They were heading north and then turned to the west – for the gap between the highest peaks. The destination was the sprawling green, brown, and gold mountain ranch and resort on the windward side, still fully illuminated by the western sun. The summer Solstice was days away and the chopper jumped into daylight - the sun was no longer hidden by Kodiak’s ominous range, which was behind the chopper now, on the eastern edge of the island. The Jet Ranger pilots’ dark visors were down, and they drove the nose of the whirling craft into the brilliant daylight.

The resort’s heliport lights – red, white, and blue – were out there somewhere. Carter and Grillo spotted the white rotating beacon on the water tower – thirty miles away.

“Military field,” Colonel Carter said, turning toward Grillo.

“Yessir,” Grillo nodded, as he stretched out to tuck the tails of his business casual long-sleeve collared shirt into the waist band of his khaki Dockers – completing the quick-change in the chopper.

“How does a Native resort rate a military airfield?” asked Grillo, pointing to the west and hollering over the whine of the turbines and the machinery driving the rotors.

“Long story,” shouted Colonel Carter, “I’ll tell you over a

beer.”

“Sounds good sir,” yelled Grillo. “You got this?”

“I’ve got it Mister Grillo, I’ll introduce you to seventy or eighty of my closest friends, just hang in there and be your usual friendly self,” screamed Colonel Carter, smiling.

“Yessir,” Grillo nodded. *Just along for the ride*, he thought. *This guy’s cool, I just hope he’s not gay. The last thing I want up here in Alaska is to be summoned for a midnight booty call. Like the doolie in ‘Gate’,* he thought.

“Here’s what you need to know, Mister Grillo,” shouted Colonel Carter. “The tribal leaders invited me up here more than two years ago to tell them all about the Kamp USAFA ‘New Look’ initiative. To be honest though, they are already circling high above the madness that’s going on in the lower forty-eight,” Colonel Carter said as he twirled his right index finger in the air above his right ear.

Cadet Grillo nodded. *I hope he is not discussing classified information*, he thought. *Not sure if I have the need to know.*

Conversation was over until the chopper touched down on the heliport and both of the side doors slid open.

More Escalades glided up to the Jet Ranger to pick up Carter, Grillo, the crew, and several other passengers that Colonel Carter recognized from earlier visits. They smiled and were friendly, but these are the kind of strangers that you don’t really talk to when you see them. Colonel Carter and Grillo just went about their business as if the others were not present.

Everything was off the record. There was no need to whisper or speak in hushed tones. Everyone that was here was supposed to be here – just like last time and the time before that.



Carter and Grillo helped load their gear into the lead Escalade and Colonel Carter said something to the driver. Then the Colonel ducked under the rotors again, went back to the helicopter, and said something to the pilots. They both gave a horizontal wave with their flight gloves on. Then Carter turned back to Grillo, with his back arched below the rotors, and said “Let’s get chow, follow me.”

Cadet Grillo nodded and skipped to keep up with the six-foot-two Colonel. Both jet jockeys walked toward the one hundred and thirty-six-foot totem that guarded the entrance to the resort. The totem looked small against the massive lodge. Still, they were two hundred yards away – two American football fields away. The pole was more than two decades old and commemorated the efforts of the tribal chiefs that had called the first gathering more than forty years ago. The chiefs commissioned the sculptor to tell the story in the tradition of the Tlingit islanders. The totem reflected the majesty and selflessness of the chiefs using the symbolism of birds – mostly eagles. The totem pole was carved from a single giant cedar, and the base was burned to seal it from the erosive qualities of the soil and moisture in the summer ground. It was erected in a quiet ceremony with more than one hundred descendants pulling on ropes and pushing carts and would withstand the elements for a hundred years or more. Care was taken not to copy the features or images on the totems seen in Kake or at Ketchikan or Sitka. The sculptor took care to ensure that the height of the totem was one hundred and thirty six feet tall, not

higher than the ceremonial totem on his home island in the town referred to as Kéix or Kéex, pronounced ‘cake’ and shown as Kake on the Rand McNally.

“Did you know that the Rand McNally prints errors on purpose?” asked Carter, as his flight boots crunched their way toward the totem and the entrance to the lodge.

“I heard that rumor, but I never saw a misprint,” said Grillo.

“They aren’t misprints,” Carter said, “They print errors on purpose to use in copyright infringement cases. I have a buddy who flies for Delta Airlines out of Atlanta. He lives in Smyrna and there is a trailer park next to a tourist rest stop there. The map shows the entrance to the trailer park to the east of the rest stop. In reality the entrance is to the west. They printed it that way on purpose. There are many others like that too – many other mistakes printed on purpose. Nothing that would cause you to get lost or get into an accident, though.”

“I believe it,” said Grillo, looking back at the chopper.

The air was calm and cool for a mid-afternoon in the summer. The day would go on and on into the evening and into the night. The best description would be civil twilight – the time of day when the sun has already dipped below the horizon, but sailors and airmen can see almost as well as daylight.

“I had a buddy that bought a retractable gear plane in the autumn and flew back home – a thousand miles,” Carter said. “By the time he got to his home airdrome, the sun had set and there was no civil twilight – not anymore. He was instrument rated and knew what he was doing but had to fish around for the gear and flaps handles. He found ‘em. Nothing happened. He learned a bunch from that.”

Grillo nodded.

“I have another buddy that bought a Pitts special and



parked it in the garage next to his Riviera. He thought he would start the engine – just to check it out. It started, and the torque inched the prop closer and closer until it dug into the Buick. He saw what was happening and had already cut the engine, but the prop was still spinning – until it stopped,” paused Carter looking at Grillo.

“Stopped in the Rivera,” said Carter.

“Right,” said Grillo. “He learned a bunch from that.”

“I have a buddy who owned a sailplane and a nice enclosed trailer to carry it around in,” said Carter. “When he moved from New York to Colorado, he tucked an upright piano into the trailer – with the sailplane – a Cirrus or a Nimbus, something like that,” he added.

Carter looked back to make sure the Jet Ranger’s rotors were tethered to the tie-downs and the nose was pointing to the west. It was.

“Looks like change is coming,” said Colonel Carter as he looked at the high cirrus and the signs of mountain wave activity in the steel blue sky. The air was calm – dead calm – on the surface.

The earth that Carter and Grillo trampled in their flight boots was dark reddish brown and soft with clumps of thick green grass that fed from the nutrients in the soil. The gentle curve of the promontory could double for the surface of Mars in a sci-fi movie set. The soil was rich and deep and spoke of forests that had thrived on Kodiak for ten thousand years or more, until the men came with axes, saws, and carts to fuel the demand for lumber in Seattle and San Francisco. The timber would have been transported to the east – through the mountain pass – then to the north and out to sea. The present-day airdrome would have served as the staging area back then – more than one hundred years ago. The air near the surface of

the earth was calm and warm, but the winds aloft carried the moist sea air to more than twelve thousand feet above sea level. The horizon was a skyline of grayish-purple mountains adorned with cap clouds that revealed that winds aloft that cooled and condensed the water vapor as it became a visible white and crested the peaks. From ten to twenty miles downwind and to the east were a line of lenticular clouds with smooth convex white and grey tops and concave grey bottoms that revealed the peaks of the invisible mountain wave activity. Carter knew that the sine wave activity of the invisible mountain wave that flowed from west to east was revealed by the clouds and the black birds soaring in the updrafts. The Colonel looked for and found the random roll clouds tumbling like white gym socks in a dryer - twenty to fifty miles downwind of the lenticulars. These too gave away the winds of change that were coming but had not quite arrived. The massive resort lodge was empty now, save for the few staff members maintaining caretaker status and running operational checks of the electrical power systems and backups, the water and gas, and the HVAC systems.

Carter and Grillo strode past the totem on their right, massive now and more than five feet in diameter and just twenty feet away. The wooden eagle watched them enter through the equally massive wooden doors, carved in the same red cedar. The deep carving and tribal images revealed the thickness of the doors that swung almost weightlessly on the roller bearing hinges.

The dominant eagle's gaze seemed to follow the flyboys as they entered the lodge. There were no hidden cameras in the totem, or outside the lodge for that matter. Maybe it was just the way the eagle was carved. The sculptor took great pride in following the ancient ways. Each symbol on the pole had great

meaning, and that meaning is known to the chiefs that will arrive tonight and tomorrow. Still, he took great pride in his ability to carve images that looked straight ahead, and greater pride in carving the eagle that followed you with his gaze.

Carter was back. Grillo was intrigued but just along for the ride. Or was he?

For Carter, it was not that long ago that he smelled the richness of the reddish-brown soil and the pungent muskiness of the cedar – the doors and the cedar that formed the massive load-bearing walls of the tribal gathering hall. The cedar joists flew upwards to the heavens where the eagles flew and where the black birds soared in the currents provided by the mountain wave. The tempered triple-paned glass was thick enough to insulate from heat and cold, steep enough to shed the snow, and wide enough to bring the summer sun indoors.

*Good to be back*, he thought as he looked at Grillo and said, “Let’s stow our gear and get some chow, we have a long night ahead.”

*Whaaaaat?*, thought Grillo. *This is damn sure more than an orientation ride from ‘Pete’ to Kodiak.*

Grillo followed as Colonel Carter crossed the giant arena with a temporary stage set up in the middle. It looked like a boxing ring in the middle of Madison Square Garden. A white boxing ring with white fabric sides and no ropes. A platform that was dwarfed by the massive hall and the open space above. A microphone in a chrome stand with a heavy black base stood at attention in the middle of the stage.

“Watch your head,” said Carter, turning back to Grillo. He skipped down the stairwell and ducked to set the example for his fellow airman. *Safety first!* The massive cross beam passed overhead as they descended into the first subterranean level where the guest and family quarters were arranged to the

left and right in hallways that fanned out like spokes on a wheel with an open space in the middle. “We’re down here,” said Adam as he tunneled his way past doors with dimly lit room numbers, then emerged into the well-lit hub and down the corridor marked by the silver and blue tribal hunting mask. “This is your room, Mister Grillo. Mine’s across the hall. I’ll see you topside in fifteen.” The Colonel disappeared into his room to shower, shave, and slip into a fresh goatskin.

The story continued of course, and yes this was an orientation flight. Colonel Carter and Cadet Third Class Grillo got chow and flew back to the point of departure. This proved to be a ‘quick jet to ‘Litch’.

In retrospect, Grillo’s original Stardust flight from Colorado Springs to Albuquerque for a gas-and-go took most of the day. Sure, they stopped at BasOps to file the flight plan. Then they took the crew van to the ‘Bravo-Xray’ for greasy burgers, fries, and malts.

Still, there was something very special about this trip to Kodiak.

Yes, the SF-3 made the trip in record time. SF-3s always did that. They punched into space with the ramjet and popped back into the atmosphere ready to configure for landing. Carter flew one of these from McClellan Air Force Base to Hickam in one hour and twenty-three minutes.

And any concern on Grillo’s part that Colonel Carter was a ‘gay blade’ that intended to ‘jump his bones’ at the tribal lodge was completely unfounded. Sure, the Seegram cadets spent a little more time ‘checking six’ after the ‘Gate’ incident a few months earlier.

*No, thought Grillo, this is a leadership test. I think that this ‘boy colonel’ is testing me to see if I can keep a secret, keep rumors to the*

*minimum, and be trusted to execute top secret missions (assuming I have the need to know).*

And Grillo was right. He scored a direct hit.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> INTERMISSION

## 11 PSYCH

MOST three-degrees declared their major then waited until second-class year to start taking majors courses.

Not so for Cadet Third Class Sweeney, originally from CS-30. *Weird things happened in Dirty Thirty*, he thought, just ask *Doggerty*. *The Class of '72 graduate that played his twelve-string in the john*. *Last-years' three-degree that liked to make doolies his 'friend'*. *The Class of '73 cadet NCO that was the most inspirational guy in the squadron – kinda like Dr. Terry Perry with the military leadership TV show*. *That guy would line us up in the balls and just motivate the spit out of us*. *The firstie that built and flew an Otto Lilienthal glider off the mound in the cadet area*. *Yup they had their collection of screamers*. *And yes, the AOC who ran the assault course with the doolies during second beast*.

There was yet a tiny question that still tormented him during his 24-hour CCQ shift. It had nothing to do with the report or the duties associated with being the Commandant's representative for Thursday night and most of the duty-day on Friday. A morsel of information (too miniscule to be considered a 'rumor') was about a girl who a squadron upper-classman had taken out on a date last weekend. The previous

weekend that he had spent in Denver. The upper-classman disclosed that his date last weekend was fun-loving, but not his 'type'. The cadet had heard this term before about other squadron mates and the girls that they dated. He was a dedicated follower of the Behavioral Sciences, and was an avid student of the Jungian archetypes. He developed a rudimentary computer program using no more than 500 IBM cards to identify suitable matches at no less than 82.0625 percent accuracy or more than 57 out of 64. He disclosed fully to the Seegram Seven squadron faculty officer that he had received EI from both his Behavioral Sciences independent study professor, and from the Department of Computer Sciences and Leadership.

The SFO was concerned about the nature of the assistance obtained from the Comp Sci department. In jest he made the statement "As long as you didn't get EI from the 'ghost' of Fairchild Hall." He smiled at the cadet.

The cadet turned away disrespectfully, not knowing what to say. This was an unintended HV trap.

*The correct answer is "No sir!", he thought. But that would require an immediate retraction and declaration of "Sir, that was a pop-off!"*

The upper-classman began to sweat profusely. He was in the much discussed 'gap' between heaven and hell, the devil and the deep blue sea. *If he calls me back for insubordination or to demand a response I'm cooked, he thought. Sure, I can swear on a stack of Bibles that I punched every one of those IBM cards myself. But that's not what he wants to know. He wants me to turn rat-fink on the 'ghost', he thought, he wants me to turn in Monty Post!*

The tortured deliberations would have continued, but he managed to just keep walking down the North Road hallway and turn right into the DMZ.



*Safe for now*, he thought. Once out of the SFO's line-of-sight he sprinted past the invisible force field between Seegram Seven and 'Gate' then to the end of the DMZ, down the stairwell to the outside concrete, then westbound again to the mailroom.

The SFO had stepped into a vacant Class of '75 three-man-room. The plate glass windows faced into the quad. He observed the cadet's flight from the stairwell toward the mailroom.

The upper class cadet burst through the mailroom doors and continued into the dark and empty service and supply area to collect his thoughts and plan a way to extricate himself from the horns of this dilemma.

The type of girls that liked *him* were heavy-set females between four feet eleven inches and five feet five. They all had fetching personalities and large breasts. The other type that liked him were rail-thin girls between five two and five eleven with highly engaging personalities and flat chests. The upper-classman found neither 'type' a suitable match – not for his soul mate, at least.

Some accused him of having a penchant for psychology because of a deep-seated need to figure himself out. He did not particularly agree with the assessment, nor did he dispute the charge. As a sophomore and junior, prior to his being promoted to the position of Seegram Seven morale, welfare, and recreation NCO then officer, he favored the additional duty of desk officer at Arnold Hall – the cadet student union. The major benefit of working the desk at Arnold Hall was the opportunity to practice talking with females of the species – both in-person and on the phone.

The choice morsel that this upper-classman discovered while on shift was so nondescript that he almost overlooked it.

A young woman that his classmate had dated the weekend before was an ‘outlier’. She did not map to any of the predictive ranges on the elaborate ‘checkerboard’ that he had developed for his 300-level elective class – Independent Study. She was simply an unknown, and he had not experienced an unknown since more than a year earlier. On that occasion, the young woman that he met at the carnival claimed that her dad, an Air Force NCO, was the executive chef for the Superintendent. She willingly gave the young sophomore her phone number – bogus of course. The memorable data point was not the bogus phone number. Rather, he had managed to identify an outlier – a young woman that fell outside of the predictive range of potential mates that he was attracted to and to whom he believed there was a reciprocal affinity. And she was his type: she liked to hold hands, she was five feet four, and she was completely proportional. She had an ample bust. Not bountiful, ample. This was the first time that he had been within three feet of such a specimen.



The cadet knew without equivocation that the Lord brings the suitable mate to the Man of God. As a young Catholic, he had no reason to become dissatisfied with or resist the will of God. The Lord gave him a very clear picture of the woman of his dreams. The vision was clear and consistent. She was of unknown height, completely naked, and comfortably seated with her legs beneath her, her buttocks on her heels, her back straight, and her hands lying palms-down on her thighs. She

was blonde and well proportioned, not because he wanted her that way. Rather, because this was the woman that the Lord had created for him, and him for her. With patience, the Lord would bring her to him. And He did.



In an unrelated epiphany, a Seegram Seven firstie has achieved a breakthrough in his own Independent Study program. This one was a fusion of Political Science research paired with – you guessed it – a basic computer program that used fewer than 500 IBM punch-cards for the Billy Boroughs.

Once again, the firstie disclosed that he had received EI from both his Poly Sci and Leadership instructor and from the Comp Sci and Leadership department.

Before an honor and ethics investigation could be approved, this firstie was able to present his observations and findings to the Superintendent's staff. Their immediate reaction was first, 'The Super cannot be permitted to hear this . . .'; and second, 'Did you receive assistance from Monty Post, the 'ghost' of Fairchild Hall?'

The presentation was innocuous enough:

"Here's the first analysis of what Sir Winston Churchill needed to know about the Axis before and during the war with Britain." He held up a hardcover first edition of a book titled *Continue to Pester, Nag and Bite, Churchill's War Leadership* written by Martin Gilbert, and published in 2004 by Vintage Canada. "You need to build a strong leadership team that meets every day," He said. "You need to do this." Then, he held up the

next prop titled *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, written by Eliot Cohen, and published in 2002 by Simon & Schuster. “You need to get intelligence data from as close to the source as possible, and subject that data to the filter of rigorous analysis. Forget about the presentation to the Board of Visitors, that’s not your standard, and neither is the script.” Then he opened the book to the page marked with torn paper and read the lesser-known quote by Sir Winston:

*Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter. The statesman who yields to war fever must realize that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events.*

Then he described the technology that was simple, elegant, and secure. There would be consoles in the library and in the common areas that would be accessible for any student with school identification, but would require no log-in credentials or authentication. These stations were for the students that did not trust the administration’s claims that the source of the data input was encrypted and not traceable. The data was what the administration needed, not the source. During initial testing, the veracity of the data was established by the preponderance of evidence and the purity of the data – with no relationship to the source. Analysis of the key behavioral, cognitive, and affective factors produced results that were astounding – to five or six ‘nines’. The purity of the data would allow the development of six new formulae that were reported in the leading scientific journal that covered the studies of heuristics and scientific

analysis. The Pentagon would have kicked-in for advanced research, but the project (loosely referred to as ‘Churchill’) was never implemented or even considered beyond initial testing. And even then, that pre-assessment was done under a shroud of secrecy – the administration told the Board of Visitors that a new wide area network was being tested.



12 EDWARDS AFB

“LAPINSKI, Theophanous P., from Harpers Ferry, Virginia?”

“Here sir . . . m’am . . . uh, right here.”

Lapinski waddled forward wearing the garb of a present day chariot officer. Nomex flight suit and tee-shirt, black socks, black combat boots, a ‘g’-suit that grabbed his crotch, a winter flight jacket lined with day-glow orange satin fabric, a Swiss army knife tethered inside the ‘peter pocket’, a helmet bag and helmet that had a few ‘hot spots’, and a flight bag with a bunch of ‘pubs’ and a local area map that he hadn’t had a chance to look at yet.

“You’ll be flying with Major Elmer T. Lee,” said the pretty ops admin type with a sweet southern drawl. “He’s from Lovettsville, Virginia. Says he’s tired of trying to rehabilitate them ‘yankees’ from Vermont; Worcester, Massachusetts; and New . . . York . . . City.”

“Ahhhhh . . . okay, uh . . . yes m’am.”

“Yew don hafta call me m’am . . . La . . . pin . . . ski,” she smiled then walked away and did not look back.

As Lapinski checked out the retreating A1C Louise C. Pontchartrain, from Bossier City, Louisiana two things

happened. He fell pathetically in love for the first time, and the ‘Kentucky Colonel’ snuck up behind him.

“Boo!” Major Lee barked into Lapinski’s left ear. Had they been at the ‘Yeager’ bar, he would have administered a ‘wet willie’ to the ‘kay-det’ from Kamp USAFA.

“Wanna RC Cola anna Moon Pie?” asked the jocular Major Elmer T. Lee. “We got ‘em right here in the squadron,” he added, pointing up to the endangered tiger’s head hanging on the wall next to the battleship gray duty desk.

Lapinski had puked on his Stardust flight at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colorado so he was too nervous to look around much. He missed the ‘second pass’ made by the pretty Airman, and he did not observe the back-lit plastic grease pencil board either. The less than enthusiastic 2nd Lt at the duty desk had just scribbled a tail number next to Lee and Lapinski’s line.

“Major Lee?” the desk officer asked. “You ready to brief and step?”

“Yessiree bob,” he enthusiastically responded slapping ‘ol Lapinski on the back. The muffled ‘whumph’ released the trapped air underneath the cadet’s winter flying jacket and all the layers below.

“Betch y’all don’t know that ‘ol Lapinski’s from the tri-banjo area of the country. Right cheer at the intersection of West Virginia, Mary-land, and Virginny. Ain’t that right Cadet Lapinski.” Major Lee winked at Airman Pontchartrain who was observing the whole exchange.

“Yessir . . . . *brrrrp* . . . yessir,” said Lapinski.

The rest was a blur. The duty desk officer asked if they had any questions, they entered the crew van, saluted the security police, and Lapinski was strapped into the jet with the help of the unenthusiastic Life Support technician.



This would be Lee and Lapinski's first flight together but not the last.

Half a dozen years ago Captain Elmer T. Lee was an AOC for Cadet Squadron Thirty. He was a cooler-than-usual AOC. He flew radio-controlled model airplanes at the parade field and Falcon football stadium on Sundays.

He made major on time and was reassigned to Edwards Air Force Base, California. Test Pilot. It was the high desert and the cold winter of January 1973 made everything look like they were inside a light bulb.

For today's orientation flight, Lee and Lapinski would cheat death in the JSF-2 prototype for the Navy. The JSF-2 was already operational and had several thousand hours of combat time above flight level five-zero-zero.

Lee's first missions in the JSF-2 were operational tests of the turbofans and the newly mounted internal ram jet engine – the first major modification. The cadet indoctrination mission profile was a takeoff from the runway in the high desert with half a fuel load. Under radar contact, the orientation ride would proceed to the flight test range – controlled airspace from the deck to infinity. Every so often a commercial airliner would stray into the restricted airspace and get 'spanked' by the controller. One time, a copilot flying for one of the major airlines reported a fast moving 'bogie' off the starboard side. The controller said 'roger', and promptly ignored the copilot's report. Several passengers with window seats on the right side



of the airliner saw a triangle-shaped object the size of a small cloud or a large office building pull abeam the airliner then shoot straight up and out of sight. The vertical ascent happened so fast that the few paying attention just turned to their neighbors in amazement as if to ask ‘Did you see that?’ They didn’t of course.

As Major Lee and Cadet Lapinski taxied the JSF-2 to the takeoff end, the control tower issued an advisory that an airliner reported an unidentified craft in close proximity to the ‘space range’.

“Roger,” said Major Lee as he turned to Lapinski.

“What do you think, Mister Lapinski? Are they back?” chuckled the ornery fighter pilot.

“Uh . . . maybe,” burped Lapinski. “Wouldn’t surprise me . . . . *buuuuurp.*”

The JSF-2 was cleared for takeoff, and Lee advanced the throttles from military power to full burner. The fuel pumps’ screams were hidden by the explosion of jet fuel mixed with ambient air as the tail cans heated to 3500 degrees Fahrenheit. They released the brakes, rotated ‘hot’ at fifty-five knots, and the craft lurched into the air at seventy-two knots accelerating rapidly. Lee climbed to flight level three-three-zero and pulled a two ‘g’ turn to the right and entered controlled airspace. Major Lee switched off the transponder and began the acceleration to Mach. They nosed over to a shallow descent in full burner, hit the Mach, and began accelerating in full burner as the indicated airspeed increased. Major Lee pulled the nose of the JSF-2 above the horizon and continued to accelerate in a shallow climb. At flight level four-seven zero they passed Mach 2 and continued to accelerate. Passing flight level five-two zero Major Lee flipped the red-guarded switch and turned the ram jet igniters ‘on’. Then he flipped the ram jet fuel pump ‘on’. The

pumps would deliver the classified and explosive cocktail to the chamber.

Major Elmer T. Lee anticipated and received the ram jet's 'kick in the pants' as the Screamer accelerated with a thirty four degree nose-high attitude.

Then they caught a whiff of burning metal, heard a thud, and the cockpit filled with thick white smoke. Without hesitation, Major Lee flipped the O<sub>2</sub> switch to one hundred percent – the air conditioning turbine was consuming itself in an act of catastrophic self-destruction. The white lithium-based lubricant was being vaporized along with the roller-bearings and shards of disintegrating steel and titanium that were formerly spindles and the raceway for the bearings that supported the high-speed AC compressor. The compressor that manhandled high-pressure air from outside – super-cooled it - then released it downstream to be mixed with the superheated bleed air from the fourteenth stage of both turbofan engines. The cockpit air conditioning switch regulated the stainless steel and titanium valve that allowed the crew to 'throw another log on the fire' in winter, or to 'roll the windows down' on a hot day.

Lee maintained aircraft control as he let the nose drop – he had already killed the ram jet. Then he switched the AC controller to OFF to block the flow of both the superheated bleed air from the turbofans, and what should have been super-cooled air from the compressor. Had the AC controller switch failed or had the AC valve stuck in transit, the disintegrating compressor would have pumped more and more white smoke into the cockpit. The white smoke would have turned a deeper shade of grey, then the grey smoke would have turned black. Had the AC controller failed to the full hot position, the cockpit temperature would have rose steadily to more than 230 degrees Fahrenheit. In that case, Lee would have called for a rapid

decompression once he confirmed that the aircraft was below fifty-thousand feet, and that indicated airspeed was below Mach one point five. Had rapid decompression been necessary, Major Lee would have opened the ram air door at Mach one point five or below. This would allow supersonic ambient air to enter the ram air duct, make a ninety-degree turn in the titanium chamber, and decelerate to less than four hundred knots. The divergent splitter blades would channel super-cooled air to cockpit vents around the windscreen and behind the seats. The screaming ambient air would howl and wail, and mix with the foul white smoke from the failed compressor and find its way to the one-way valves under the seats. An observer in a chase plane, an airliner, or a Klingon warship would only see the space fighter dip the nose to a shallow dive as the afterburner flames extinguished and as the craft slowed to subsonic speed. Seconds later, the casual observer would see a momentary puff of white emerge then disappear from the bottom of the fuselage – just below the cockpit.

In the cockpit, Lee had already declared an emergency, regained a ‘visual’ on the runway as soon as the cockpit was cleared of smoke. He had switched the transponder ON and to Emergency, and completed the emergency procedures checklist, and lined up on extended final and slowed to drop the gear, slats, and flaps. The controller cleared the test flight to channel three, and Lee called “Three green, final approach, full stop for an emergency landing.”

“Cleared for emergency full stop landing,” the controller barked.

“Cleared for full stop,” Major Lee said with a click of the mike button.

“Gear down and locked, checklist complete,” said Lee.

“Roger,” said Lapinski.

Lee glanced at Lapinski to see if he was holding his 'cookies'. He was. *Good man Lapinski.*

Then he squeaked onto the runway like a butterfly with sore feet amid the fire and HAZMAT trucks, the maintenance vehicles, the red spinning lights, the runway supervisory officer watching with hopeful intent, a gathering of eagles in their staff cars with their minions issuing quick commands over their hand held bricks, all under the watchful eye of the supervisor of flying in the control tower. All that contributed to a very busy day for Mister Lapinski.



## 13 NIGHT WATCH

SMART LEADERS know when to observe and when to stay away. Researchers in Quantum mechanics know that the mere act of observing the interaction between forces and matter will change the outcome. The auto mechanic knows it too – when he checks the pressure in the tire, he knows that a little air escapes – the measured pressure is always a little less than it was before he took the psi reading. The eager job applicant that ‘drops by’ – to drop off a resume unexpectedly – never really knows why he didn’t get the job. When the chief executive dresses up like an intern to find out what’s going on in the new call center – he will see something, but he will never find out what is really going on in the new call center. When the senior officer dons a raincoat and service cap to measure the level of compliance with regulations, or sneak into the barracks to determine the extent of sexual harassment, the one thing that he can count on is that he will see something else – something other than what he sought out to measure. Or, like the Superintendent who understood what the cadet was saying, but really had no interest in what was really going on east of Harmon Hall. *My scripted presentation to the Board of Visitors is*

*enough*, he thought; it had been approved by the Chief of Staff's public affairs office.

“Yes, the cadet from Princeton, New Jersey has a good idea,” the Supt confided in his trusted advisor and golf buddy, “but this is my domain. This is not ‘the ‘Point’ or ‘Annapolis’. I don’t want a punk kid snooping around here – regardless of how sound the theory. I don’t care about the fact that he knows this place like the back of his hand. And, I don’t give a dang that he knows the underground storage locations, utility connections, and tunnels where the cadets hide their booze.”

Later that day, the Seegram Seven firstie walked out of the Director of Admissions’ conference room. The Director was non-committal. This was a cadet’s best chance to make a difference on this ‘special duty assignment’, an assignment on the staff in preparation for joint Euro-NATO pilot training at Sheppard Air Force Base followed by a three-year assignment at Upper Heyford, and then a four-year assignment at the Remote Training Unit at Mountain Goat. The Director didn’t say ‘no’ to the dangerous proposal, but she knew that the Super did not want a ‘punk kid’ ‘snooping around’. Both the firstie and the Director knew that the meeting was a stalemate.

At the same time, the Seegram firstie and the Director both knew that the administration had no idea what went on in the dorms late at night.

The seasoned unit commanders stayed away from the dorms at night. The smart ones know that the seemingly innocent action of ‘stopping by’ the squadron at night would produce disastrous results. Disastrous for the commander, his immediate superior, and for nearly every cadet in the squadron.



“Quickly, men,” the cadet squadron commander barked. “Get Kirkpatrick back here and tell him to round up more towels. I want sixty, make that seventy towels – and every wash cloth in the squadron.”

Steam poured out of the shower room as twelve nozzles pumped scalding hot water into air that was condensed by the super-cooled October air at 7,250 foot standard lapse rate. The stairwell doors by the floor to ceiling mirrors were propped open to allow hot air to escape into the stairwell and rise four floors. As the hot air rises, cold October air is drawn into the first-floor hallway, the men’s room and the men’s shower – to replace the retreating superheated air.

The plastic laundry tub – commonly known as a ‘grey elephant’ - is eased into the narrow passageway that leads to the open-bay shower stalls. Towels are soaked and placed against the sides of the passageway to prevent water from escaping through the space between the plastic tub and the tiled, narrower opening to the showers. As water begins to pool in the shower bay, more wash cloths and towels were applied to the drain and to the gaps between the plastic and the tile. The water continued to rise.

“Strip to the waist,” the cadet commander hollered while looking back over his shoulder. He assigned underlings the task of packing the gaps with towels and wash cloths. He ran out into the hall to make sure that the stairwell doors were still opened, and to look at the clock in the hallway. The Officer-of-the-Day and the cadet Officer-in-Charge left the Command

Post more than forty-five minutes ago – the start of the evening inspection; a hallway inspection that he himself had made more than a dozen times during his cadet career.

That twenty-four-hour shift was simple and predictable. Dress for Command Post duty following cadet wing intramurals and sign out for a full day tour-of-duty at the Command Post. Report to the Command Post prior to 17:15 hours local time to review the outgoing officer's inspection log entries; then to stand for change-of-command at 17:30 hours local. Receive the hand-held two-way radio – referred to as the 'brick' – from the outgoing OIC, and receive the giant set of keys on the seven-inch stainless-steel key ring. This would afford access to all general storage areas, commanding officers' offices, the first-class locker rooms, and the doors guarding the tunnels. The OIC's first official duty is to get chow at Mitchell Hall with the Officer-of-the-Day, then report back to the Command Post with enough time to review the call log and set out at 19:00 hours local time on the four-hour 'walkabout' inspection that would include a security check of every stairwell, hallway, and secured space in the cadet area. The checklist guides his steps: physically inspect every storage area and closet not associated with the telephone switches and relays. *Examine every storage area - except the ones that are home to the 342 bottles of Smirnoff Vodka, more than 23 bottles of Seagram's Seven, more than 1,287 bottles or cans of beer, and more than 120 gallons of Gallo wine,* he thought.

That was forty-seven minutes ago. The OIC left the Command Post forty-seven minutes ago and rode the first quadrangle elevator to the sixth floor to start the walk-around. He blew off the storage rooms in the two squadrons on floor six, then trotted down the stairwell to the fifth floor. The fifth and sixth floors surrounding the first quad were completely



isolated from the rest of the massive dorm. Once the inspection on the fifth floor was complete, the OIC trotted to the fourth floor – the terrazzo level – to celebrate with a smoke.



As he dragged on the cigarette, he thought back to the first day of his cadet career – more than 800 days earlier. The day was fast, new, and simple. He got off the bus and signed in after leaving his Samsonite at the base of the stairwell. They told him to stand in-line and move forward as medical technicians – two rows deep on both the left and the right – fired the immunization guns into both shoulders at the same moment. A new ‘rookie’ cadet at the front of the line passed out and was lying in the grass off to the right of the line. The kid two spaces ahead of him saw the other cadet lying on the grass and passed out just as the medical technicians pulled the triggers on their guns. The streams of fluid cut a 37mm incision in the left arm and a 48mm incision in the right arm as he collapsed onto the pavement. Following the shots, the cadre rounded him up with a group of about twenty others to march

in a loose gaggle to the barber shop. The line was long but moving steadily. At first it looked like the line was moving as cadets with long hair were stepping into the barber shop to take a seat and wait. Once inside, he saw that each haircut took less than 23 seconds. The line was moving because the barbers were shearing heads with consistent and machine-like precision. Every Emil J. Paidar barber chair seat was filled until the stunned and freshly shorn valedictorians, captains of their high school varsity football teams, and Eagle Scouts stepped onto the linoleum floor as they avoided looking in the mirrors behind the barber chairs. Most ran a single hand from back to front over the stubble. After their 'buzz cuts' the upperclassman lined them up along the window in the hallway and made sure they were all his – all assigned to 'Avengers'. They all were. The final stop was at hand – down two flights of stairs to the cadet wing supply division where a single thirty-two-inch square cardboard box awaited each new cadet. Inside each box was everything that would be required for a successful freshman year. New tee shirts, shorts, and socks; a copy of the cadet wing regulations; and a mark-one mod-zero glass ash tray – standard issue. Everyone got an ash tray, he thought as he crushed the butt under his boot-heel and blew the smoke downwind.

Twenty-one minutes ago, the OIC continued down the stairwell, left the terrazzo behind, and rushed through the inspections of the two squadrons on the third floor, and the two squadrons on the second floor.

As soon as the OIC's retreating shadow disappeared, and as soon as his heel taps faded into the hallway leading to the second quadrangle, the stairwell doors were opened, and the showers were turned on – full hot.

Within the hour forty-three screaming and naked future Air Force leaders were splashing in the home-grown swimming

pool that provided an invigorating diversion on an ordinary school night in October. At 21:02 hours local time the dam burst. The force of the water propelled the plastic ‘grey elephant’ toward the bathroom wall and pinned seven bolicky cadets against the tile with a constant flood of water. Seventeen naked freshmen were carried down the stairwell by more than 18,531 gallons of water that were suddenly released. A wise fool wearing a jock strap and flip-flops surfed the full length of the north/south hallway that extended into the neighboring squadron. A senior walking east along the North Road hallway heard the crash of the ‘grey elephant’ as it broke loose from its moorings. He paused. He was wearing Hanes briefs, standard issue slippers, and a West Point bath robe. He turned around and crouched into the four-point stance of a sprinter and allowed the three-foot wave to lift him and carry him like Superman – the full length of the hallway. Within three minutes, the water from the home-made swimming pool had drained from the shower and bathroom and the hallways. The water had predictably found ‘low ground’ as it traveled down three stairwells and one elevator shaft.

As the freshmen squeegeed the last remnants of swimming pool water from the dorm rooms and hallways with rolled-up towels; the OIC hung up the phone after delivering his ‘zero defects’ or ‘ZD’ report to the answering machine in the Commandant’s office. He hung up the phone and stepped outside for his last smoke of the evening. He would get four hours of sleep tonight - if he could get to sleep quickly in the OIC cot in the command post. *To sleep at all*, he thought, *I’ll have to unscrew the three 225-Watt halogen quartz floodlights that illuminate the terrazzo walkway, just outside the east glass wall of the Command Post.* One was burned out thankfully – he only had to unscrew two with the help of the movable scaffold that had

been outside the Command Post since his last OIC duty.



The firstie thought back to his first week as a smack – more than three years-ago now. The upperclassmen were not allowed to touch the new cadets. All the same, in the first few days, a senior with the stature and demeanor of a Norse god pulled him aside and out of view of the others. Then the godlike senior pushed his index finger into the doolie’s Adams apple and made it clear to the cadet candidate that his very presence was anathema to the demi-god’s vision of what Olympus should be – a forge for more and more demi-gods like himself. The smack was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit for the first time – the Norse god just walked away. Years later the powers and principalities unleashed a battle – good versus evil – the fighting continued until the sun touched the horizon and stood still for a moment. A crack of thunder would silence the roar of the battle - and some fell. Dagon’s Temple would eventually fall and be ground to powder. For now, though, the prisoners had the keys to the jail.



So, the end of another day came and went. The commanding officer stayed away. The evening was uneventful, at least as far as the report stated. There was no failure to

disclose on the part of the OIC. The extracurricular activities were expertly synchronized to elude the casual gaze of the Comm's rep. The OIC was free to submit a 'ZD' report with a clear conscience.

Not bad, but it was only a school night. The next two nights would be different. The full moon was approaching, and Friday and Saturday nights were coming. The good news for the OIC – he would hand over the 'brick' and the keys to the next poor buggar at precisely 17:30 hours local time on the Friday. He would have the weekend to himself. His first free weekend for more than three months.

There was one more thing that the cadet Officer-in-Charge had waited for - for a very long time.

*This thing that we all call the 'Real Air Force', he thought. Surely there are things that the AOCs and SFOs don't want us to know.*



## 14 THE REAL AIR FORCE

Command Post Log: Friday, December 31<sup>st</sup>.

From his perch in the tower, the SOF called the DO who was watching his secretary take down the Christmas decorations in the Director of Operations wing of the headquarters building. She wore red high-heels. Christmas was just another day to the senior ops guy – two tours in Vietnam, one in Thailand. His secretary was something else though, a real tease. *Off limits*, he thought. *Married. Married to the Wing King's exec.* Nice though, very nice to watch. *A perfect ten. Just she and me*, he thought. *Nice buns.*

The DO returned wistfully to the Macallan 25 in the bottom of his official coffee mug and highlights reel of his time in Asia – those were the days. The mug had the silhouette of his jet – fully loaded with twenty-four Mark 82s, and his call sign. Call sign ‘Keebler’. He could do the things over there that he hoped that his second wife – back home – was not doing. He did, and she did too. It was a lost cause from the start. He made the fatal mistake of bringing home a rare catch. A slender but well-endowed native from the PI. A wily fox who played hard-to-get, but knew the native ways and made sure that she

moved into his field of view at the Officer's Club, while feigning to ignore him completely. It worked.

The 'accident' that brought them together was the round of tequila shots that her blonde wingman got a self-absorbed Captain to buy for the fox, her BFF, and his fly-boy buddies. All the blonde said was 'Let's do shots.'

The Captain was Keebler's exec at Clark Air Base. She knew that. There was one shot left on the tray – on purpose – and the blonde BFF, without hesitation, dragged Keebler into the fray. The circle of shooters licked the salt, downed the tequila, and bit the limes. Keebler looked up and saw the fox's eyes padlocked on his. She cut him out of the crowd and let him pull her into the solitude of the senior officer's lounge.

The next morning, she let him know her dream was to finish her degree to make her grandparents proud. They were Filipinos and her sponsors while she completed her degree in Manila. Her dad was a GI – now retired and living in Texas. Her mom – was remarried and living off base with the 'Super' - her family called him that. He was the DCM's Production Superintendent, a respected Chief Master Sergeant on the base.

The jackpot. Keebler – the 'boy-Colonel' - had hit the jackpot. The fox was an American citizen, born and raised in paradise. No one-night stand, no impact to his Top Secret security clearance. While she showered in his senior officer's quarters, and towed off with Keebler watching every move, he made his decision. The fox would be his third wife. He had met his match.

Her English was perfect, she was native-born, but educated in the American school. She could communicate with the locals – her grandparents kept her current. And she could keep her man in a way that drove him quietly insane. She knew the rules of engagement. Keebler would not fraternize with the

troops or their juicy girls. She had her wingman arrange the shots at just the right time and then rescued the Colonel from the uncomfortable need to stand around after the tequila shots and say something brilliant. By pulling Keebler away from his underlings and by letting him pull her into the senior's lounge, she had rescued him. Now it was *his* turn to rescue her. She did it in the usual way and according to the local customs.

The remaining four months of that assignment were a blur of ecstasy for Keebler. She thought his name was cute and called him 'Keebler' without asking how he got that call sign. They went everywhere together. And they *did* everything together in the privacy of his senior officer's quarters.



Years before, as a Major at RAF Upper Heyford, Keebler had a different call sign. A call sign that others had given him.

His first call sign was 'Ranger'.

At the bar at Heyford, the Major called 'Ranger' by those of equal or higher rank, would refer to the two-step process of hawking other guy's wives – mostly for fun. Mostly on Friday afternoons after the Flying Safety Meetings at the bar, at squadron Christmas parties at the club, and at going-away parties for squadron mates that had PCS orders for their next assignments.

These gatherings were a target-rich environment for field grade officers who were perfecting their skill at 'romancing' junior-officers' wives. No touching, just lust of the eyes and a few off-color comments that the wives expected from the



‘players’ in the squadron. They were mostly harmless. A few senior officers stepped over the line occasionally. Always consensual, always dismissed as rumor, sometimes referred to vicariously by a knowing wink or a devilish nod or smirk. ‘Ranger’ received a genuine ‘*Good boy*’ moniker, from the senior officers or the hopeful below-the-zoners that wished that they had the chutzpah that the Major had to shoot, move, and communicate – the way he did.

Ranger published his theory aloud for the benefit and amusement of his devotees, the peers and underlings that wanted to lead, fly, and fight the way he did.

The theory was simple and went like this.

“Guys, when you move from the dining room into the bar, switch on your moving target indicators. The chicks in the bar are there for a reason – they want it bad,” he would say. “And here’s what you do,” he paused for effect. “Have a couple of drinks under your belt – shots work best if you need to catch up. When you are ready to make your move, take one more shot . . . you will become *invisible*. If in a high-risk environment – a visual on the Wing King with two chicks in tow – take another shot,” he paused. “That will make you *bulletproof*.” That was it.

That was enough to draw a favorable response from the gallery. They clicked their glasses in a toast to Ranger, their hero. They all laughed a wicked laugh as if on-cue. They had all heard the line before, and were thrilled to hear it again – the sequence of events that resulted in being ‘bulletproof’.

The stragglers in the dining room heard the roar of laughter, then turned back to their conversations.

“Major, you’re different though,” piped a junior Captain, wanting to be accepted by the in-crowd.

The Major’s entourage – still howling - looked at the

Captain's chest and saw slick wings, no star, no wreath. The seasoned fighter crews dismissed him. He was silenced. The few ground-pounders in the gauntlet included the dentists and Steve, the orthodontist. They were non-rated types, but were already 'in the club'. The club of cool guys and players.

The doctors, nurses and dentists had little in common with the aviators but their partying was legendary. They included the Major and his cohort in their number. In return, the Major admitted them to *his* inner circle.

The bar crowd was now silenced, not by the Captain's abrupt and uninvited interruption in the festivities, but by the in-crowd's reluctance to interfere with the challenge that the Captain had just thrown down before the Major. Professional suicide for the Captain.

Something happened though. Something that *does* happen from time to time. The gap between Heaven and Earth inched open and remained open for what seemed like a second or two. The Captain dared not step through the gap though – he had already said too much and was petrified, silenced. The entourage was silent. Then, the Major – *Ranger* - broke the silence and all listened intently.

"Take your best shot," said the Major. He paused as the Captain looked slack-jawed at his savior, grateful for the break in the silence. "Take your best shot Captain," repeated the Major laughing, the others joined in. The Major said it twice and would not repeat himself a third time – he would just walk away. The Captain knew this.

The Captain was in the gap between life and death. It was an innocent comment, *just a joke*, he thought. *Didn't mean nothin' by it*, he thought. Still he had to speak – now – the Major had issued the verbal order. Twice. 'Take your best shot,' the Major had said twice. Speak now or suffer the consequences.

Three strikes and you are out. Out forever.

With time compression and his life passing before his eyes, the Captain spoke. “All . . . alright,” he stuttered. “A poem,” he paused. Randy’s Pub at the Club was silenced once again. All eyes were on the Captain. The last time a poem was read at the Officers’ Club bar the crowd disapproved, they booed, and they permanently shunned the poet.

“Alright,” the Captain gathered his wits. He began . . .

*“The thing about Ranger – sex, love and danger,  
And his invisible and bullet-proof self,  
Is the means and the ways that make fly-boys amaze at the way  
women drop from the shelf;  
Married or single they all want to mingle – this guy makes them  
tingle,*

*With a magic spell just like an elf.”*

He forgot the second to the last line in the stanza, but he ended up with a rhyme. He froze and looked straight ahead at Ranger’s command pilot wings – the Major’s wings. He thought he was going to die. He made quick plans to congratulate the Major for something, then exit the bar, walk fast for the club entrance leading to the circular drive, then sprint to his car. He couldn’t wait to get out of there.

All eyes were on the Major. The Major lifted his Hennessy in the snifter, paused, then broke the dead silence by shouting “To the elf”, in a powerful baritone.

“To the elf,” the bar erupted, and the shouting resumed.

The Captain – still ‘out-of-body’ – could not think of anything else to say or do. He was single, straight, and horny; and wanted to be just like the Major, the one they called

'Ranger'. He had no girlfriend to pull him out of there, and could not think of anything clever to do or say to the circle of aviators, dentists, and one orthodontist that were both admiring the Major and glancing bewilderedly at the Captain.

The Captain moved hesitantly one step forward toward the only thing in his line-of-sight past the Major. The circle opened to allow him safe passage – one step closer to the bar and to Simon Randy.

“What the heck’s he doing?” the orthodontist said.

“Heck if I know,” said the Base Commander.

“Is he drunk?” someone asked.

“Darned if I . . .”

“Holy shazbat,” two bar flys gasped as the Captain squeezed past them and extended a rolled up flight suit sleeve and hand toward the polished wood and brass handle swinging mid-bar from a golden chain. The handle was attached to the chain, the chain was attached to the ship’s bell at the far right end of the bar.

The pub grew instantly silent and the silence was broken by the sharp peal of the bell. The Captain rang the bell at Randy’s Pub to a packed house on a Friday night. A Friday night before a three-day weekend Bank Holiday.

The roar that emerged from the bar was Super Bowl-loud and silenced every conversation in the dining room. The Wing King excused himself from admirers in the dining room, and entered the oak-lined passage leading from the nave to the pub, with both his aide and executive officer in tow. The Wing King grinned from ear-to-ear. The roar from the bar crowd surged.

“Who bought the bar?” smiled the Wing King as he nodded at Simon Randy and held up two fingers. Two shots of Macallan 25 in a snifter – a double – the Wing King’s ‘usual’ when one of his minions bought the bar, or when one of his

deputy commanders bought him a drink.

“One of Ranger’s guys,” the Base Commander answered.

The swarm of teetotalers from the dining room crowded the entrance that the Wing King and his henchmen filled before stepping onto the red and black ‘pizza carpet’ of the pub. The bar was jammed three deep and there was not an open square foot on the carpet. Boots that had been polished to an obsidian-mirror shine were horribly smudged. Boobs were squeezed and assets wrapped in silk were pinched. Colonels’ and Lieutenant Colonels’ faces were slapped by British gals that worked the base. Lewd obscenities were slurred and whispered into the ears of Lieutenants’ and Captains’ wives. This was their chance to make their move – do or die.

The Wing Commander authorized reinforcements to keep the bar open ‘til three AM.

The Captain’s foot-hold and hand-hold on the bell-handle was broken and he was lifted up and away from the bar that he had just bought. The force of the thirsty crowd did the lifting. He looked around at the shouting faces that were directing their attention at Simon Randy and his shell-shocked bartenders who were cops and maintainers – picking up extra money on a Friday night. The tips were good.

The Captain missed the comment made by the Base Commander – ‘one of Ranger’s guys’, but the die was cast. The Captain was now one of Ranger’s guys. From this point he would learn the Ranger salute, and be required to ‘hit the deck’ for ‘deceased insect’ and ‘carrier landing’ calls.

One more thing, the poem hit fertile ground. The Major had picked up the call sign ‘Ranger’ when a butter bar. A rich Second Lieutenant with four years’ time-in-service and flight pay as a student pilot at Columbus Air Force Base. He applied for Air Force commissioning and pilot training as an eighteen-

delta, a green beret. The irony - he never went to Ranger School, but felt no need to explain that to his instructor pilots or the Operations Officer that 'rolled the bones' at the Club on Friday nights almost ten years ago. They just called him 'Ranger' and the name stuck until now. Everyone knew you didn't get to pick your call sign anyway.

Now he had a *new* call sign – one that others blessed him with that night at the Club. '*Keebler*'. That was his new call sign. Keebler the elf, the elf that could navigate the razor-thin gap between invisible and bullet-proof. Ranger was now Keebler at the bar; then the Major became a Lieutenant Colonel, and then he became a Colonel.

The Captain didn't give the Major a new call sign, his buddies did that. The Captain merely gave the Major's buddies the seed of an idea, a good idea. The Major's buddies just took the idea and ran with it. The Major's buddies just started calling him 'Keebler'. Keebler the elf. That's how call signs are born.



That was then. The DO awoke from his daydream and the memories of days-gone-by that got him from where he was then to where he is now. Things happened, wives were won and lost and given away to others. Call signs changed – once. And rich and powerful men still had access to beautiful women. Then more than now, though. More looking now, less touching.

The Command Post hotline broke his trance with the

advisory that the RCR was below limits for recovery, the primary alternate was 'clear and a million'.

"Divert the fleet," came his response. "Notify Headquarters, then notify me when the birds are on the deck. I'll be portable."

He closed his office door and sent his secretary home.

"See you at the club tonight," he said as they walked toward the main exit, she in her red high heels.

"See you later, sir," she responded politely in a sweet southern drawl.

Looking out the window, he shook his head imperceptibly as she walked to her reserved parking spot - an innocent indiscretion on his part. A few whispers that 'pretty secretaries get reserved parking', but nothing that anyone would say out loud or do anything about. Anyhow, she's married to the Wing King's exec, so 'Who will listen to your complaint?' they say. Things like that happen everywhere - it's expected. Key and essential and all.

She drove away as he pulled the side exit door closed and jiggled the lock.

He opened, then slammed the door on his official Jeep, the dark blue one with official yellow lettering on the side. He cranked the engine and flipped on the UHF radio, set to tower freq.

"Ops One portable," he barked into his hand-held Motorola brick.

"Roger Ops One, have you portable, Command Post out," was the response, as he shifted into drive.

He rolled away from the Headquarters parking lot - official parking in the front - and hit Gunslinger Drive, headed for the flight line.

"SOF, Ops One; how's it going?"

The SOF was one of Keebler's Boys – hand-picked for absolute loyalty. Loyalty in speaking; loyalty in bringing information to Keebler.

“Ops One, SOF; twelve birds departed the hold starting at fifteen-seventeen hours; all enroute to Nellis with ATC. Eleven birds ZD except Rerun nine-zero with full cold cabin, coordinating with Salt Lake Center for emergency recovery at Hill, clear and a million, winds two-two zero at five. All Nellis birds fifteen-thousand pounds or more, no dumping. Rerun nine-zero fourteen-five.”

“Copy all,” he responded, “Ops One out.”

Keebler and his boys thought with one brain. The SOF delivered the information that Keebler wanted without asking. He groomed them that way. The Wing King's guys tried Keebler's patience – they were fiercely loyal to the Commander, mildly respectful to him as the Deputy Commander of Operations. Professional courtesies.

He eased his official vehicle up to the flight line entry point and returned the salute that the security cop rendered to the right front bumper of Keebler's vehicle.

“Good evening sir,” said the well-armed two-striper defending the parked jets.

“How's it going?” he replied, through the half-rolled-down window.

“Pretty good, sir,” he shivered, “. . . pretty quiet out here.”

“Happy New Year, Airman,” he responded with the hint of a smile. “Keep up the good work.”

“Will do, sir,” he said with an awkward salute from parade rest – then sliding to attention as an afterthought. The Colonel replied in kind.

*Bass-akwards*, the Colonel thought as he dropped the salute, released the brake, and eased onto the parking ramp.



He turned left out of habit and pointed the nose of the jeep towards the old SAC ramp at the eastern edge of the ramp – devoid of planes. He spun the wheel to the right and pointed the staff car to the northwest – to the place where a few high cirrus were still on fire. Official sunset was more than an hour ago. *The end of another year*, he thought. Not a good year, just another year.

His parking spot allowed him an unobstructed view of the ramp and tower, from the SAC ramp that was newly re-surfaced six months ago.

He reached for the brick-pack of Presidentés from the Dominican Republic. A gift from the Senior Master Sergeant in Maintenance Control. They had smoked and joked together for more than fifteen years, three continents, and three wives each. Both single now, both ‘greybeards’. They had both been there and done that. They had the tee-shirts to prove it. Both shot-at, both survivors. Any competition was professional and played-out on the down-low.

Keebler’s visits to Maintenance Control were strategically timed. Just after shift change once-a-month on a Friday. His boy’s pre-positioned sixteen cases of beer and ice in the zinc-lined cattle troughs – beer for the troops. Once positioned they would signal ‘all clear’ and the Colonel’s jeep would appear to signal the end of the day-shift and the start of festivities to celebrate the weekend. The Senior Master Sergeant addressed his troops with the customary tough as nails expectations for oh-dark-early on Monday, then dismissed his troops to ‘fall in’ on the troughs of beer.

Questions arose regarding ‘Who bought the beer?’ but after the first two each, they quit asking and focused their attention on the tri-tip beef and brats on the industrial grade barbecue pits.

The unexpected but always appreciated conference occurred in the hangar - a closed door session between the Colonel and the senior maintainer. Legend held that the Colonel was 'pissed' at the Senior Master Sergeant, something about an oil sample that appeared in a cardboard box, wrapped in newspaper. A fifth of Johnny Walker Blue was in the box when the Colonel entered the hangar. The Colonel emerged from the hangar empty-handed. The box was never seen. It seemed to disappear.

Both greybeards emerged together with somber faces. The Colonel would nurse a beer until it was warm, and thank the troops for their work repairing jets during the week. The Colonel and the Senior would smoke a Presidenté, then the Colonel would depart the scene with a simple wave to the troops that were throwing Frisbees and footballs. The Senior would wave back without smiling, and the party was on.

They counted each other as friends.

Keebler looked into his rear-view mirror as he dragged on the cigar. It was tight-wrapped, strong, and smooth.

The SAC ramp would have been his demise, had he been on-station back in April. Both he and the Deputy Commander for Maintenance were deployed to Red Flag when the jet caught fire.

One of Keebler's boys was in the Base Hospital, hooked up to an EKG when the sirens blasted, the ambulances rolled, and the senior medical staff ran out of the building. Two med techs remained to shrug at the officer who was there to get his annual flight physical.

"An incident on the ramp, sir," was all they said.

"Get me a phone," he barked. He called Keebler at the Nellis Command Post. He checked his watch. *The birds are*

*between launches at Nellis*, he thought.

The call was brief and to the point.

“This is Captain Sullivan, Gunslinger Command Post,” he began, “. . . urgent message for Gunslinger One.”

Keebler’s voice replied. “Go Sully”.

“Incident on the ramp,” he barked. “Goober’s in the tower.”

“Gunslinger out,” was all Sully heard before the ‘click’.

*Mission complete*, he thought.

In less than ten words, Sully had alerted Keebler that a Class A emergency had occurred – a ground emergency. Sully telegraphed to his *mäestro* the fact that a member of the inner-circle was pulling SOF duty in the tower. Keebler would call Goober and Goober would tell Keebler everything that his boss would want to know without having to ask. That’s the way Keebler and his boys rolled. Pure loyalty, pure efficiency. There was no way that Sully and Goober would let Keebler twist in the wind. If they lost Keebler, everything would unravel. Nobody would let that happen. Accidents happen, but not the kind of accident that is caused by neglect. Keebler and his boys each had each other’s backs.

Sully was in the dark for a while, helplessly frustrated, and still hooked up to the EKG machine. He had to complete the annual flight physical today – to deploy to Red Flag and join the fight tomorrow. Deploy to Nellis and join Keebler and the boys in Las Vegas for the weekend. Goober would get off SOF duty ASAP, enter crew rest, and fly south with Sully tomorrow. They would flip a coin for left seat. One squadron commander questioned why Sully and Goober were taking a bird to Nellis, he had two guys available that had never been to Red Flag. Keebler nudged the DCM who piped up and reported that tail number zero eight four had seven hours ‘til depot at

Sacramento, zero eight nine was scheduled to complete the fleet for Red Flag. It was all carefully orchestrated months ago in the deployment plan ‘blessed’ by the Wing King and Headquarters at Langley.

The Wing King already knew that Sully and Goober were ‘the only ones available’ to fill in at Red Flag. They were both instructor pilots and four-ship flight leads, scheduled to instruct the live drops – slicks and low drags, five hundred and two-thousand pounders. Both were Fighter Weapons School grads. The only ones available. The Wing King nodded knowingly and moved on to the next slide.

That’s the way Keebler and his boys rolled. All his boys with him at Red Flag. The most successful Red Flag in Gunslinger history. No losses, bombs on target.

On the flight down, Goober gave Sully the highlights, and saved the details for the reunion with Keebler and his cohort in Vegas. Goober told Sully enough to ‘scratch the itch’, and Sully didn’t pester or nag for more detail. Sully knew that this was Goober’s time to shine over beer and whiskey with Keebler and the boys ‘downtown’. Besides, Sully knew that *his* was not the story that others would respect. He was, after all, hooked up to an EKG machine. Goober had an unobstructed view of everything from the tower. And besides, Goober had taken immediate action to divert the fleet and recover one airborne emergency while all heck was breaking loose on the ground. Keebler would let Goober tell the story any way that he wanted to, and Keebler would give full credit to Goober for taking initiative. Everyone knew that Keebler knew everything that was happening, as it happened. Still, nobody wanted to steal Goober’s glory. This was *his* time to shine. Goober told the story his way and all listened. Keebler listened most carefully of

all.

At four AM – over single malt scotches, Keebler asked Sully for his side of the story.

The story was complete, and the weekend was on.

Keebler had a suite at the Bellagio – a crash pad and command post for the weekend. Nobody asked. Keebler paid for just about everything. His boys took turns picking up a round here and there. An ADVON team took over a blackjack table – a seat at a time at a single deck table. The pit boss and Keebler exchanged glances one or twice. When Keebler and his boys occupied all the seats at the table, Keebler was offered ‘third-base’. He deferred to Sully. A new dealer was brought in and was then replaced on schedule. A third dealer was brought in after Keebler and his boys cleaned out the rack. Double shots appeared from nowhere, and Keebler asked the pit boss to cash everyone out. They stepped away from the table, left the checks where they were, and the table was closed. Four security guards and the casino manager appeared from behind pillars and curtains. They, together with the pit boss and dealer surrounded the table.

Keebler led his team to a limo that inched forward to the casino main exit. The door slammed and the driver took Keebler and his boys to the Palm without asking ‘where to’.

*That’s the way we roll*, thought Keebler, snuffing the cigar butt in an aluminum film can. The small cylindrical radar film magazine can that fits perfectly between the switches on the fuel panel, at the front of the center console. *Rolled*, he thought, *those were the days*.

As soon as the jets taxied clear of the active at Nellis, Keebler told the SOF to take over in the tower, he would inform the Wing King personally. Face to face.

## 15 SAFETY EVANGELIST

WHILE all that was going on, Cadet Third Class Doggerty had codified a number of additional safety minutes for his upper division independent study course.

“That’s the last one General,” Sneddekker said to the Comm.

“That’s quite a future leader you have there, Snedd.”

“Well sir, I’m all for giving credit where credit is due.”

“What do you mean, Snedd?”

“Well sir, the Director of Safety called from Kirtland Air Force Base.”

“Tell me something I don’t already know, Snedd,” the Comm interrupted. “It’s your man Doggerty’s codification . . . right?”

“Correct sir, but it’s more.”

“Pray tell Snedd, pray tell.”

“Well sir, Safety says that there’s a new agency being stood-up at Kirtland. Something about the wings falling off the F-111s.”

“Humph,” the Comm growled as he pushed his leather armchair back away from his desk. “Let’s walk, Snedd. The ‘roach coach’ should be pulling up to the cadet clinic in five.”

Both men sucked in their guts and squeezed their expanding frames sideways into the coffin-sized ‘vator leading from the Comm’s suites to the welcoming sidewalk below.

“Phew,” exhaled the Comm. “That was a tight squeeze.”

“No . . .” paused Snedd, electing to omit the expletive that rolled so smoothly off the tongue at other times. “Sorry sir.”

“No harm, Snedd. No harm at all,” added the Comm.

“That blasted Dean has no less than seven ‘vators, including the big O’Keefe elevator that leads from Mitches to the loading ramp by the Comp Sci Department.”

*Whaaaaaat?* thought Snedd.

“Sonofa-bee gets three, maybe four deliveries a week of snick-snacks for the faculty. All kindsa stuff,” the Comm scowled.

“Whaddya mean sir?” asked Snedd feigning interest.

“Naw, nothing,” the Comm relented. “Let’s get back to the subject at Kirtland,” he said as they got in line behind the pretty nurses and med techs at the ‘roach coach’.

They savored their Chicago dogs, tots, and cans of diet Shasta in the shade under Vandenberg Hall near the entrance to the mail room.

The Comm took a ‘soft pack’ of Lucky Strikes out of his alpha blouse pocket. He smacked the pack lightly to dislodge a smoke. Three presented themselves. Tall, medium, and short. He offered the top smoke to Snedd who took it reluctantly.

*I like the filter-tipped smokes more,* thought Snedd. *Don’t want to upset the Comm though.*

Snedd bent over and carefully withdrew the top cigarette from the pack. Then he reached into his pants for his Zippo lighter. He lit the Comm’s cigarette first with his own dangling between his lips.

“Not toooo fine,” the Comm said after exhaling the initial

drag.

*Whaaaaaat?* thought Snedd.

“P-p-pardon me sir,” stuttered Snedd.

“Did I stutter?” chuckled the Comm. “Naw . . . just pulling your leg Snedd.”

The AOC gave him a puzzled look.

“No, just joking around Snedd,” said the Comm. “Just using the new lingo that I heard over in Fairchild last week. Not-toooo-fine. Comp Sci Department I think.”

“Oh . . . okay,” said Snedd, not wanting to tip his hand.

“Yeah,” the Comm said, “it’s a new saying that they use when something is really cool or really fine. Adjective I think. Maybe an adverb.”

“Right sir,” Snedd mumbled just before inhaling deeply. “Not . . . tooooo . . . fine,” he exhaled without emotion.

They crushed their butts and dropped them into the ‘Duck’ brand bucket ash trays in the stairwell and bounded upstairs to resume their discussion.

The rest of the afternoon was uneventful. The Comm revealed that the Supt did indeed have his eye on Doggerty as a future Kamp USAFA safety wonk.

The rationale was simple. Doggerty had codified all of the current safety minutes for publication. Squadrons used their mimeograph machines to kick out ‘dirty purples’ for military training and other official functions. Now, they could draw from the archives of more than 200 codified safety minutes for squadron training and the annual Kamp USAFA Safety Olympics. They were even toying with the idea of offering a summer safety kamp for high school students that were likely picks for Congressional nominations.

The Director of Air Force Safety at Kirtland liked the



codified safety minutes. And the apparent commander of the new agency at Kirtland wanted to implement codification for the operational testing that would prevent wings from falling off of airplanes.

The rest would be revealed in due time. For now Major Alex B. Sneddekker would keep these secrets locked in his heart of hearts for another day.

To test the veracity of the Commandant's claims, the Superintendent had his exec summon Cadet Third Class Chance P. Doggerty from Worcester, Massachusetts to his offices and suites in Harmon Hall.

Doggerty made haste from the halls of Seegram Seven, all along the ground level, into the secret door in Arnold Hall's eastern wall, up the 'vator, and into Arnies by the men's room near the northeast corner.

*I'll scoot through Arnies past the theater, thought Doggerty, past the bowling lanes and through the secret door that leads to the Harmon Hall print shop loading dock. Then I'll skedaddle around the docks and through the door that leads to the Harmon Hall basement elevator.*

He punched the button for the Supt's suite.

The Supt was waiting.

"Missssster Doggerty," hollered the Supt the moment the cadet stepped out of the 'vator. "Welcome to Halcyon," he smiled and chuckled. "Bet you don't know how I knew you were coming right up?" asked the Supt with a good-natured and patriarchal smile. He was looking down from his six-foot-four-inch frame.

"Nnnn-no sir, but I'm not surprised sir," Doggerty answered with respect.

"Waaaal, that's okay," said the Supt. "Lettttts just say that the pretty cashier in the bowling alley . . . welllll . . . she's my eyes and ears. Let's just leave it at that Mister Doggerty."

Doggerty smiled and sighed with relief.

“So how’s your mom and dad doing son?” the Supt asked as he placed a fatherly hand on the cadet’s shoulder.

“Fine sir, just fine,” Doggerty said with a relaxed tone. “Gonna see them during spring break. Back in Worcester.”

“Not . . . tooo . . . fine,” the Supt said as they walked past the gatekeeper’s desk and into the ‘red leather’ room.

The rest is history.

Doggerty entertained the Supt with tales of devastating injury and horrible accidents that were transformed into teaching moments that would prevent recurrence and extend life. The Supt leaned forward with interest and almost spilled his mocha java latte on his mahogany and red-leather upholstered coffee table.

Each one of these ‘safety minutes’ could be delivered in ninety-seconds or less. Each one was codified and part of a much larger index of categories that included things near and dear to the Superintendent’s heart. Aviation, automobile, athletics, just to name a few. The numbering system was brilliant and a leap forward from the archaic Dewey Decimal system “that the knuckle-draggers use over at the library.”

He apologized to Doggerty for that characterization, but somehow knew that the cadet would understand. He did.

The note taker that Doggerty had prepared months earlier for the Director of Safety’s staff at Kirtland was one of many copies that he got the Kamp USAFA print shop to publish.

*Amazing what a case of Corona will do*, thought the cadet.

That was then. Later that evening, the Supt’s light was still on in Harmon Hall. He was thumbing through Doggerty’s safety book and tagging the ones that he considered Kamp USAFA ‘greatest hits’.

*This young Duggerty will go far, he thought. Yes, very far indeed.*

***Safety Minute 58-2045. Influenza – The Gift that Keeps on Giving***

‘The gift that keeps on giving’ was first commercially trademarked in the US by a phonograph manufacturer in 1925. The trademark has expired.

Last year’s East Asian ‘flu’ outbreak caused one million confirmed deaths worldwide and may be responsible for another estimated million deaths this year. This is the second major global killer following the Spanish ‘flu’ outbreak in 1918 that continued into 1919.

The recent Asian ‘flu’ outbreak was caused by a virus known as influenza A subtype H2N2, or Asian flu virus. Researchers at King’s College in London concur that the Asian virus is actually a hybrid strain (cocktail) consisting of avian influenza and human influenza viruses.

Nostradamus predicted that we need to hunker down for another global ‘contagious respiratory disease’ in the next ten-to twenty-years. Jean Dixon, a well know psychic holds that WWII will start by the end of this year so we may not need to worry about influenza any more. But then again, you may want to stock your Civil Defense fallout shelters with a few ampules of ‘flu’ vaccine.

The inventory of Spanish flu vaccine is exhausted (beware of counterfeits), but there is a surplus of British vaccine available from the Crown Colony of Hong Kong being dumped on the market. I guess with the Asian flu running its course they don’t expect strong demand for an Asian flu vaccine until the next century. The Soviets are brewing a batch of Ural Mountain flu vaccine, and the Brazilians are getting in on the game with a Rio de Janeiro cocktail that includes inactive virus imported from

East Germany. The pink sheet stock traders are offering shares of pharmaceutical firms that distribute flu vaccine but watch out for 'pump and dump' schemes.

If you have a 'friend at the factory' we can recommend stockpiling Hong Kong H2N2 (or derivative), Brisbane 1943, Johannesburg 1951, or Tokyo 1952. These carry the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval and have been certified 'inactive' by Underwriters' Laboratory (UL). All four have a robust secondary market.

***Tips and Techniques for Friends and Family***

*First, who should get the vaccine?* Line up the kids aged six-months through age nineteen. Then line up grandma and grandpa ages fifty and older. Anyone aged twenty through forty-nine should get it too, unless they have:

- Chronic medical condition or weak immune system,
- Patients in nursing homes or receiving long-term care,
- Persons at risk for complications of the flu (pneumonia),
- Caregivers for any of the above,
- Caregivers for children six-months or younger,
- Pregnant women or their caregivers, and
- Children younger than six months.

*Second, who else should NOT get the vaccine?* Be sure to consult with your physician if you or a family member suffer from these conditions:

- Persons with allergies to eggs or egg products,
- Those with neurological disorders (Guillain-Barre, epilepsy),
- People with a fever, acute respiratory ailment, or infection,
- Patients that have a mercury-based preservative sensitivity.

*Third, while some patients have negligible side effects:* some experience soreness at the site of inoculation, low grade fever, aches, runny nose, headache, sore throat, and cough.

***Safety Minute 63-2713. Rogue Sniper – Civil Defense  
White Paper***

*A moment of silence for the late President John Fitzgerald Kennedy,  
may you rest in peace.*

In light of the violent assassination of our beloved President John F. Kennedy, Civil Defense Director William P. Durkee recommends that citizens tune their radio dials to Radio Free USAFA for a most salient and somber ninety-second safety minute.

The Soviet threat is looming, and the cancer of Communism is creeping steadily toward the equator in Asia, Eastern Europe, Central America, and steadily northward to the equator in South America and Africa. In light of the near certainty of nuclear war and copycat snipers after the brutal assassination of our President, the following steps are recommended:

***Tips and Techniques for Friends and Family***

*First, in the presence of an active sniper (shooter) be prepared mentally and physically to take action.* If you are caught outside of your nuclear fallout shelter in the presence of an active shooter remember that you have three courses of action:

- Run,
- Hide, and
- Fight

*Runners:* Be sure to have an egress route and plan in mind, then run like hell! To optimize your chances for survival:

- Evacuate even if others elect to remain behind,
- Leave your book bags, back packs, briefcases behind (5Bs),
- Bring others with you as long as they will also ‘run like hell’,
- Don’t move the wounded, but do dial ‘O’ for Operator,
- Keep your hands visible while exiting kill zone and when entering the safe zone.

*Hiders:* Find a good hiding spot outside of the sniper's line-of-sight. If possible, pull doors closed behind you, then lock or barricade doors as a deterrent. Indiscriminate snipers seek to inflict mass casualties (law of large numbers). By hiding behind a locked door, a busy sniper will look for easier targets and pass you by. Once inside a locked room or barricaded office, look for a rotary or push-button phone to alert authorities. If in an office, bring the telephone and cord and hide under the desk to make your call. This will muffle your voice and not alert a sniper to your presence. Speak slowly and distinctly and tell the telephone Operator to summon the authorities (police, fire, ambulance). Provide your name, location, and situation. Tell her that you have an active sniper (shooter) on the scene.

*Fighters:* Attack the shooter(s) when in imminent danger. If multiple shooters, pick the runt of the litter and attack. Strive for maximum 'punch', use martial arts (Kung Fu, Jujitsu, etc.). Use improvised weapons (gardening equipment, pots and pans, fire extinguishers, sporting goods, motor vehicles). Return fire if armed, aim small to miss small, and use Kentucky windage.

*Second, when law enforcement arrives, be sure to raise your hands and follow instructions.*

The first law enforcement team to arrive at the scene will be in hot pursuit of the sniper with the goal to 'take him down'.

The next response team will treat and remove the injured.

Once the response team comes back for you, plan to give a statement, follow more instructions, and don't leave until instructed to do so.

Do remain calm and follow instructions, drop what you're carrying, raise hands, and spread fingers, and keep hands visible.

Don't yell or scream, don't lunge at the officers, don't run down the hall yelling 'we're all going to die'.

***Safety Minute 65-0389. Charcoal Grills – Use Good Judgement and Grill Safe this Summer***

More than 1,300 vacationers suffered grievous bodily harm this Independence Day.

The hapless outdoor barbecue grill can be the cause of serious injury and catastrophic disaster if mixed with bad judgement:

***Tips and Techniques for Friends and Family***

*First, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for safe operation of your back-yard charcoal grill.* Remember, the three ingredients that faster safe operation of a charcoal grill.

- Charcoal briquettes,
- Charcoal lighter fluid, and
- Source of ignition

Be sure to use only bagged charcoal Briquettes and Charcoal Lighter Fluid (slow burning) bearing the Seagram Seven seal of approval.

- Keep the briquettes dry to prevent excess moisture or water-logged briquettes.
- Do not use any of the 'enes' or 'tones' to light your charcoal grill. Dummy Procedure includes: using gasoline, naphthalene, acetone, cigarette lighter fluid, or carbon tetrachloride to light the briquettes.
- Do soak the briquettes with a modest amount of charcoal lighter fluid and allow the fluid to soak into the briquettes before applying the ignition source.
- Use the twelve- or fourteen-inch matches to light the grill. This provides an ample margin between the griller and the flame. Don't use book matches, short stick matches, or Zippo lighters that put the operator in close proximity to the flammable mixture of charcoal and the fluid.

Preventable disasters include:

- One innovative backyard griller attempted to use the charcoal grill in the garage during a thunderstorm. He placed a modest amount of charcoal lighter fluid on the briquettes, let the fluid soak in, then lit the briquettes on fire with a twelve-inch fireplace match. When the wind shifted, and the torrential downpour entered the garage horizontally, he closed the garage door. His wife came down to see how the meat was coming along and found him coughing uncontrollably in the enclosed space of the garage. She looked around and noticed that sources of additional fuel were within ten feet of the glowing briquettes: the car, the lawnmower, the snow blower, and two red plastic gas cans – one that was full and the other half-full. See Safety Minute 59-0073. *The Backyard Killer and the Backyard Griller.*
- A less fortunate griller made the mistake trying to light briquettes that had been left outside after last weekend's festivities. They were soaked with water. He followed the correct procedure of spraying the briquettes with charcoal lighter fluid, but they were already fully saturated with water. The fluid burned but the briquettes remained wet and black. He tried it again to no avail. The fire department was called by a neighbor when his third attempt to use the last of the charcoal lighter fluid generated only a miserable blue flame. Since he had used all his matches, he added gasoline to the miserable blue flame and the kids ran like the wind to get off the deck. He over-poured the gas which erupted into a magnificent orange fireball



that toasted the grape ivy growing in the pergola overhead. When he fell backwards and dropped the gas can on the deck with a tinny ‘cling’, it tipped to the side and discharged most of its contents which ran through the one-quarter inch spaces between the redwood and ignited as it poured into the pea gravel below the deck. He scrambled backwards as his wife looked on with horror from behind the sliding glass door in the kitchen. When the Fire Marshall arrived one of the firemen asked ‘Arson?’ The older man shook his head and said ‘No, stupidity’.

**Avoid Dummy Procedure, follow these helpful hints:**

- Don’t use ‘gas’ or cigarette lighter fluid
- Keep the grill away from the house
- Don’t use the grill in the garage
- Don’t add accelerant to an open flame
- Don’t let the kids take turns lighting the grill

***Safety Minute 63-1701. Boating Dangers – Those Deadly Inboard Engines***

More than 170 private pleasure boats with inboard engines exploded during the one-hundred days of danger last summer. These innocuous-looking cabin cruisers and cigarette boats look sleek and elegant as they gracefully carve across ponds, lakes, and the open seas. But don't be fooled, an explosive cocktail of oxygen, fuel vapor, and the occasional spark may be hiding in the engine bay – *your* engine bay.

As you know from freshman chemistry, the ambient air contains 78.08 percent nitrogen, 20.95 percent oxygen, plus a number of other elements including the 'noble' gasses helium, neon, argon, krypton, xenon, and radon. I guess the other elements are ignoble (chuckle, chuckle). Those include carbon dioxide (molecule), methane (molecule), nitrogen oxide (molecule), hydrogen, and hydrogen dioxide (molecule, water vapor), and ozone (molecule). While not the only flammable ingredient in air, oxygen is present in sufficient volume to be your chief concern when operating your inboard engine.

To generate fire below deck, we all know that you need a.) fuel, b.) oxygen, and c.) an ignition source. To create a violent explosion though, you also need d.) all of the above (chuckle, chuckle) in an enclosed space. The engine bay of your inboard boat provides that as well.

***Tips and Techniques for Friends and Family***

*First, boat manufacturer are well aware of the deadly elixir that is brewing in the engine compartment of your inboard boat. After decades of jury trials and large settlements for the victims of explosions of boats, manufacturers have finally started adding fresh air intakes, fans, and fuel vapor exhaust ports on boats with inboard engines.*

Ninety-three percent of all pleasure craft explosions occur at

the moment of engine start. In these cases, the fuel vapor enriched air in the engine bay was only waiting for the unsuspecting ‘captain’ to start the engine. Ignition to the starter motor and the spark plugs provided the missing ingredient – all that was needed for a spectacular explosion.

Procedure: First, before turning the ignition ‘on’ and pressing the starter button, be sure to visually inspect your engine bay’s fresh air intakes and exhaust ports for obstructions, then run the fan to expel the deadly mixture of air and fuel vapor. Listen to make sure that the fan is operating and watch your vent exhaust streamers to confirm that the engine bay is ventilating. Second, start your engine. Sailors who reverse the procedure and start the engine first get mixed results (chuckle, chuckle).

*Second, just like the ninety-two-year-old man in Pennsylvania who spontaneously combusted in his living room, your boat can explode without an open flame source and without the ignition switch.* It is still important to keep the engine bay clear of oily rags, trash, and other debris that can trigger spontaneous combustion.

Spontaneous combustion occurs when fuel (any type of fuel) begins to oxidize, increase in temperature, and finally ignite with no external spark or flame.

It works like this: the farmer will tell you about the bales of wet hay that were stuffed into his new barn all winter. Gravity provided pressure and bacteria occurring naturally in the environment began to decompose the wet hay under pressure. The heat built up in the middle of the hay could not escape and finally reached the point of ignition (150 – 160 degrees Fahrenheit). Our farmer saw the hay smoldering and was smart enough to call the fire department. He had learned this lesson from a less fortunate farmer who began to unload the smoldering hay from his barn, exposed the deadly mixture to

fresh oxygen from the atmosphere, and saw the hay and barn go up in flames.

An engine bay stuffed with greasy and oily rags will provide the heat and fire needed to ignite the fuel-enriched vapor in the engine bay, and that with no external spark or flame at all. Just like the hay, the greasy and oily rags will begin to generate heat in a closed compartment. The heat trapped in a closed space will not dissipate but will continue to build until the ignition (autoignition) point is reached (450 – 460 degrees).

*Third, be sure to check the fuel tanks, spare gas cans, gas caps, fuel lines, fittings, and fasteners.* By limiting the presence of fuel leaks and fuel spills in the engine bay, you will limit the excess fuel vapor that supports combustion and explosion.

Just as high school counselors and parents tell their students to ‘keep pregnancies to a minimum’ (chuckle, chuckle), take a few lessons learned from experienced sailors and boat-owners and keep inboard boat explosions to a minimum (chuckle, chuckle).

***Lagniappe:***

Keep open flames and smoking materials away from the engine bay and fuel tanks.

Don’t let the ‘kids’ start the boat, and don’t assume that others know the dangers of inboard engines.

And as always, remember that ‘safe boating is no accident’.



## 16 ALPHA ROSTER

“DETAIL for today . . . Officer-in-Charge . . . Cadet First Class Billy Q. VonKamp, from Madrid, New Mexico.”

The squawk box in Major ‘Snedd’s office died down and the new day had begun.

The AOC had spent the first day of the fall semester trying to figure out the names of all the new third-classmen assigned to Seegram Seven. That was back at the start of the academic year. Nearly nine months ago.

He was well aware of the fact that he had butchered Newbeck’s name from the get-go. *Newbeck, Neustetter, Newcomb, Newberg, and even Newell, and the list goes on*, he thought.

“Time to double-down on the alpha roster,” he said to himself, “I’m the men’s leader after all.”

The Alpha Roster presented not just a few problems for this Master Navigator with a penchant for active duty bases. *The Real Air Force*, he chuckled to himself. *The ‘RAF’ as these cadets are wont to say.*

He grew bored trying to memorize last name, first name, middle initials, and hometowns. How come the firsties don’t

have to memorize the other cadets' hometowns?

Feeling sorry for himself the hapless Snedd got up from his desk and shuffled into the foosball room for a coke and a pack of orange-colored crackers. The flight surgeon had said 'If you get anything out of the vending machine, get the orange crackers. They have a little protein in them and less sugar than a Snickers.'

He dangled his Marlboro between his lips like a junior high schooler in the back of the bus. Then he fished around in his trouser pockets for loose change hiding there with the keys to his Porsche 911 and his Zippo lighter.

The left pocket yielded 42 cents. The right pocket a quarter.

He pulled his best dollar out of his money clip and fed it into the new-fangled bill reader. Had to 'iron it' against the corner of the vending machine to get it to 'take'. It did.

A co-cola and change, then he fed a quarter into the candy machine for the crackers.

Ennui set in as he popped the soda took a swig, then a long drag on his cigarette. He really didn't want the crackers anyway. Save them for later.

He walked back into his office and emptied his pockets onto his desk and tossed the crackers there too. Another drag on his cigarette and swig from the coke can and he was off at a slow pace.

Click . . . click . . . click . . . click . . . pause at the 'B'-board then click . . . click . . . click . . . click.

He stopped and looked through the doorway and out the plate glass window of a three man doolie room. Smacks were not allowed to close their doors.

The view he saw was the athletic fields overlook almost a mile away.

*Wish I was there looking back at me,* he thought. At times like

this, he wished he were back on the line. Dropping Mark 82s on Charlie Kong, or the big one to end the Cold War.

Click . . . click . . . click . . . he continued.

*Wonder if Grillo is in? he thought. Might be nice to chew the fat. Talk about Sturgis maybe. Or Mount Rushmore. I think Grillo likes me. He did have the doolies bring that red vino to dinner last month when we were seated at the south end of Mitches.*

Click . . . click . . . click . . . click . . . click . . . he picked up the pace.

Grillo's ears perked up like a Chihuahua. *Holy frijoles*, he thought, *AWACS control, we got inbound bogie at nine-o'clock. He's squawking ident and at 7,250 feet above mean sea level.*

Grillo took a deep breath and looked at his open door. *Fiddlesticks*, he thought. *Shoulda closed and locked it when I came back from Econ 210. Can't close it now. Snedd's too close. He'll see my door close and get his feelings hurt – baaaaaad.*

Grillo's classmates in the DMZ heard it too. Lapinski, Doggerty, Sweeney, Fogarty too. Click . . . click . . . click.

But Grillo's room was line-of-sight. Along the North Road hall. Snedd's ingress corridor. The other three-smokes relaxing in the squad were in the DMZ. They could high-tail it through 'Gate' and disappear down the stairwell.

Grillo snapped into action like leaders tend to do. He silently lifted up on his quads and moved the chair out just a foot. Then he executed an in-place one-eighty, genuflected like the Catholic boys in the squadron do then disappeared under his desk. The chair magically tucked itself in.

*Not a moment too soon*, thought Grillo from his hiding place under the desk.

Click, click, click, click . . . *He's in my room*, thought Grillo, afraid to move a muscle or even exhale. Click . . . click . . . click.

*He's executing a three-hundred-sixty degree holding pattern, thought Grillo. Please God, make him leave. He did.*



Click . . . click . . . click . . . the sound was receding back down toward the empty CCQ desk, the 'vator, and the AOC's office.

Grillo exhaled a thankful sigh of relief.





*Hmmmm*, thought Major Sneddecker . . .

Third-Classmen	Home of Record
Anton J. Grillo	Avondale, Arizona
Theophanous Pablo Lapinski	Harpers Ferry, Virginia
Michael J. Sweeney	Venice Beach, California
Chance P. Daggerty	Worcester, Massachusetts
Harlan K. Newbeck III	Pascagoula, Mississippi
Francis X. Boyle	Montpelier, Vermont
Orville W. Fogarty	Green Bay, Wisconsin
Irving NMI McSchwartz	Hibbing, Minnesota
Joseph T. O'Bannon	Mather AFB, California
Timothy T. Nasturtium	Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin
Philip J. Kalalabad	Traverse City, Michigan
Ziggurat D. B. Stardust	Bowie, Maryland
Watrous F. Spiggott	Kohler, Wisconsin
Samuel K. Zawicki	San José, California
Kevin C. Speedwagon	Champaign-Urbana, Illinois
William B. Gahenna	Providence, Rhode Island
Ebenezer L. Weirnam	Washington, D.C.
Charles W. d'Vine	Muscle Shoals, Alabama
Philip K. Smurtsburgher	Fort Morgan, Colorado
E. Allan Poe IV	Hyattsville, Maryland
Petros V.S.O. Cognos	Bakersfield, California
Etienne X. François	New Rochelle, New York
Karl J. Young	Des Moines, Iowa
Hans B. Zugspitze	Luckenbach, Texas
Bartholomew X. Taylor	Paso Robles, California
Ivan T. Winnebago-Superbus	Tysons Corner, Virginia
Santiago R. Lucchese	Tucumcari, New Mexico
Parker C. Niblick	Crestview, Florida
Caligula R. Neugaarten, Jr.	Placer County, California

*Sheeeesh*, thought Snedd. *This is hard. Those poor doolies, they have to memorize all this spit.*

“Well they’ll all be moving up the food chain tomorrow anyway,” he whispered to himself.

He wistfully unwrapped the plastic cellophane protecting the orange crackers. The ones with peanut butter inside.

A swig of co-cola and another drag from the cig.

*I don't think I can take it anymore. I'm dying on the vine. These guys in '75 don't need me*, he thought.

Another drag. Another swig.

He looked down at his feet. He unlaced his low-quarter Corfams. Then he did what the Comm told all the AOCs not to do - on pain of Article 15.

He flipped his shoes bottom side up. Then he pried the heel taps off with a flat-head screwdriver and a set of needle-nose pliers. He threw the metal taps and brads into the trash can.

He didn't even close the door.



## 17 JUNE WEEK

GRILLO led the way to the base of the Bring Me Men Ramp to board the executive coaches for Falcon Stadium. Not for a football game, for their last bus ride as cadets-third-class. The busses that would bring them back to the cadet area seven hours later would see them promoted to two-degrees wearing shoulder boards with significantly more chevrons than ever before.

The Class of '74 would depart without delay for the new Third Looie assignments. The Class of '75 would have Seegram Seven all to themselves for a while. Albeit a short while.

Fogarty and Boyle had declared their intent to resign after final exams. Major Sneddekker tried to get them to stick around for cool summer programs but to no avail. The graduation of the Class of '73 would be their final military formation. The commencement address by Senator Barry Goldwater would be five hours from now. *Four hours and fifty-nine minutes*, Grillo thought to himself.

Sweeney and Doggerty were selected for Ops Air Force visits to the Air Force Safety Center in New Mexico. They would pack their bags without delay. The Director of Safety's T-39

Saberliner was already parked at Peterson AFB BaseOps. Doggerty was being groomed as the Superintendent's pick for Wing Safety Evangelist for firstie year. Sweeney was the backup. *The heir and a spare*, thought Grillo.

Lapinski would buddy-up with Grillo for first period Airmanship 490, freefall parachuting. Their mothers thought they were taking ballroom dancing classes at Arnold Hall. Both were tagged as First BCT element NCO's reporting to the firsties affectionately known as 'elephant breeders'. Both would bug-out for third-period leave before returning in early August for the first day of classes as a two-degree. *Commitment*, shuddered Grillo.

McSchwartz, O'Bannon, Nasturtium, Kalalabad, Stardust, Spiggott, Zawicki, Speedwagon, Gahenna, Weirnam, Charles d'Vine, Smurtsburgher, Poe IV, Cognos, François, Young, Zugspitze, and Bartholomew X. Taylor (from Paso Robles, California) were grist for the mill. The Commandant was making good on a bet following Army's 17 to 14 win over Air Force at Michie Stadium. They would all pack their bags for Army Airborne training at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia.

Winnebago-Superbus was finally accepted by l'Ecole de l'Air and would undergo a month-long immersion in French conversation tables, literature, and Napoleonic history before 'crossing the pond' in time for the Bastille Day celebrations and to witness the completion of le Tour de France. The minor 'incident' with the DVP's daughter was chocked up as a misunderstanding. No harm, no foul.

Lucchese, Niblick, and Neugaarten were scheduled for first period leave, but all would attend 'R' Flight in lieu of summer vacation. Lucchese and Niblick couldn't navigate their way out of a paper bag and failed sophomore Navigation 201 in the T-29 Flying Classroom. Neugaarten failed sophomore math with

the lowest grade in the entire third class. As a new two-degree, he would need a solid base in differential calculus if he expected to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree.

Grillo continued to daydream about living a life of sex and danger as the Class of '73 lined up in the covered portal leading onto the football field covered with an immense gray tarp and 844 folding chairs. The two graduates going into the Marine Corps were easy to spot.

*Aaaand, theresssss Mister Leisure . . . ,* thought Grillo. *The lonely jar-head. Lilly-white. Crosshairs on his white hat (chuckle, chuckle). I need to be here just to make sure he graduates (chuckle, chuckle).*

And sure as shootin', Grillo was experiencing what he and his brothers-in-arms would experience many times from this day forward. Graduations, sa-wa-dee flights, going away dinners, and retirement ceremonies. Grillo was now very sure that he wanted . . . needed . . . to be sure that C1C Leisure would graduate and never again darken the halls of Vandenberg.

*He won't be the worst, though,* thought Grillo as he lapsed into the story of the rumor that sounded all too familiar.

Nearly two years ago McSchwartz had dragged Grillo to one of the Senior Catholic Chaplain's 'dinner and a movie' events in Arnold Hall. The feature movie was *Brian's Song*. After the film, the padre talked to the troops about 'sexual purity' in the military and how to avoid the dangers of fraternization. Then, the chaplain went down a 'bunny trail' the likes of which Grillo had not heard since.

*Just as the ice cream man began as a child that was molested by an uncle;* Grillo reminded himself, the officer with the call-sign 'Ranger' was wounded by a hedonist that snaked his first wife at the O-Club. It happened during the razor thin gap between reporting to Columbus Air Force Base as a Second Lieutenant

with his new bride and the first day of pilot training. Less than a week later.

The nameless, faceless instructor was on a short leash and restrained by a direct verbal order not to engage student pilots' wives. Technically, he obeyed the order. Ranger had arrived at the base and signed in late on a Friday. He had reported for duty and his cross-country honeymoon and leave enroute was over. His pilot training class was not scheduled to begin for another ten days following his arrival – two Mondays from then. He couldn't wait.

Ranger had time-in-grade and knew the way the system worked. A fellow mustang managed to get Ranger's name on the base-housing list well in advance of the graduation of two pilot training classes. The mustang locked down Ranger's base house just before Ranger's pilot training classmates reported to the base.

Mustang delivered a case of Corona to the clerk at the housing office in a parking lot drug-deal at the base auto hobby shop. The clerk was a car buff and Mustang made a point to make quick friends with the housing clerk that worked on his own car at the auto hobby shop. The Corona was an unexpected gift. Mustang had two cases on the passenger seat of his Corvette. "Do me a favor and help me do my oil change," Mustang said to the clerk – already working on his Nova. They were both Chevy men. The clerk's interest was piqued, he secretly lusted after Corvettes. Mustang knew this. He had seen the copy of Road and Track on the clerk's desk, and the centerfold of the Corvette carefully removed from the magazine and carefully displayed under the Lucite desk protector in the low-man's cubicle. The clerk, a first-term airman, was the junior-man at the housing office and got no respect – no respect until Mustang showed up and displayed

genuine interest in the clerk, his home of record, and the clerk's family back home.

Mustang and his wife got the newly vacated family unit closest to the Officer's Club – crawling distance away. The unit next to Mustang's was vacated six weeks later by a new graduate and his wife. Mustang nurtured the relationship with the clerk. Dangerously close to fraternization, just a needle-width's margin. Both were discrete.

Mustang 'dropped by' the housing office to ask about the Lawn of the Week competition. The visit was perfectly orchestrated. Mustang arrived three minutes after the civilian Director of Housing's Cadillac rolled out for lunch. Mustang walked across the street and entered the housing office. The junior clerk was alone. Polite words were exchanged, and within the minute Mustang was headed out of the office and proceeded back to his base quarters without delay – on foot.

By the time the Director returned from lunch, the Civil Engineers had already entered the work order to replace the windows and had ordered a replacement furnace. Winter was approaching. It would be three weeks before the Director learned that the list of houses awaiting maintenance action had increased by one. How did I miss this? he thought.

Another pilot training class had graduated and the new 'inbound' married student pilots had one fewer house to accommodate the new class. Latecomers found off-base housing. This left the house next to Mustang's 'down for maintenance' for another three weeks. At the end of two weeks – on a Friday afternoon – Ranger and his wife walked into the housing office just as the house next to Mustang was released for occupancy by Civil Engineering. New windows had already been installed and a new furnace was on order. Ranger was offered the house if he wanted it – with the stipulation that

Ranger and his blushing bride would be inconvenienced with a furnace replacement once the new unit arrived.

Ranger accepted the house and quickly unloaded their luggage and his new bride's cosmetic case. Base regulations stipulated that once a new family 'occupied' a base house, they could not be bumped by a higher-ranking officer arriving on base. The clerk knew this, as did Mustang and Ranger. An obscure clause in the joint travel regulations that both Mustang and Ranger were familiar with from their prior-service as enlisted troops.

That evening, Mustang transferred the second case of Corona to the clerk in the Auto Hobby Shop parking lot. The clerk 'helped' Mustang change the oil in his 'Vette.

"Gotta meet an ex-Army buddy at the Club," Mustang said, thanking the clerk for helping with the oil change.

"No problem," smiled the clerk, thinking about the Coronas.

"Meet me here at six AM tomorrow," said Mustang. "The Base Commander's a Corvette Club member. He's got permission for us to use the Live Oak runway for time trials."

The clerk nodded. "I'll be here, sir. Wouldn't miss it." The junior enlisted troop thought that was it.

Then Mustang said what the clerk was not expecting.

"You can drive my 'Vette down the runway," he paused. "If you want to," added Mustang.

The hook was set and all debts were repaid. The clerk left quietly, teeming with excitement.

Mustang's bases were covered. Ranger had his house, and if anyone thought to ask why a Captain let a junior enlisted troop drive his Corvette the answer was simple. The airman helped the Captain change the oil on this Corvette. All bases were covered.

Mustang knew about the instructor that snaked guys' wives,



but in retrospect neither Mustang nor Ranger expected him to move that quickly and hit with that degree of accuracy.

From the front porch of the Officer's Club the instructor dragged on a cigarette and saw Ranger and the pretty blonde get out of the Riviera, then watched Ranger carry his bride across the threshold. Sonofabitch, he thought. Fresh meat.

Mustang and the instructor both knew the schedule of classes arriving and departing the base. New student pilots arrived with their pretty new brides. After eleven months, graduates moved out in six-week intervals for water survival then on to their RTU bases. The instructor knew that the butter bar with the pretty blond would not start training for another week, ten days to be exact. The Lieutenant would not technically be a 'student' for another ten days. His wicked smile revealed his carnal motives. His personal best was three days. Ten days – more than a week – would give him ample time to make his move, snake the new wife, and dump the broad. Dump her well in advance of her husband being officially classified a 'student pilot'. Dump her without violating the Wing Commander's closed-door mandate 'not to shag the students' wives'.

The instructor would accomplish his vile mission. Three would pay the price.

Ranger would get an education in the unofficial culture of the pilot training base in the post-Vietnam era. Instructors snaked students' wives and girlfriends.

His pretty blonde wife would be shattered by the sweetness then the cruelty displayed by the handsome and charming instructor – here to help families with their adjustment to military life on base. A full-service adjustment that was both passionate and brutal. Passionate in convincing the new bride that her homesickness was nothing more than a reaction to her

new husband's neglect. Then the lie that was whispered discretely – unforgivable. Then the invitation to abandon her neglectful husband who was drinking beer with Mustang and Mustang's buddies and playing 4-5-6. Then the invitation to check out his new truck in the Officer's Club parking lot. Then an invitation to check out the planes landing at the end of the runway – the last sorties of the day. He never mentioned the sunset, the kissing, or the rape.

The instructor was a master at making an emotional connection, then laying out an innocent trail of breadcrumbs to entice his victims to take the next step, then the next step after that. By the time he 'caught and released' his prey by escorting her back into the club, she was shattered and well advised that if she disclosed her interest in his truck, and her willingness to watch the brilliant sunset at the end of the runway – she would be branded a tramp and a whore. A pretty southern belle whore that would get no respect from the Wing leadership and would cause irreparable damage to her husband's career.

After a weekend of 'what the heck were you doing?', Ranger drove his pretty bride to the tri-county airport to fly home for a 'family vacation' in the Ozarks. She never returned. They remained married of course – only married personnel could occupy on-base quarters. A blonde with long hair like his bride was seen in and around the house – Ranger's house on base. It was not her though, just a student at the 'W' that looked like his wife. Nobody said anything. Close friends winked understandingly. After T-37s, a brunette was seen with Ranger at the club on Friday nights. 'Did she dye her hair?' some asked each other. Neither Ranger nor Mustang responded, only glancing at each other. Others knew the truth but offered no response either.

By the time Ranger graduated and packed up his household

good from his base quarters, people had quit asking. The house stood vacant and available for the next class of married student pilots. The clerk looked back wistfully on his experience driving the 'Vette down the runway. And the instructor dragged longingly on a cigarette and browsed through sweet memories of his conquests.

The training base leadership were on to him. He was pulled out of the flying training squadron and banished to the quality assurance flight – a euphemism for the leper colony of decorated war heroes that were deemed unable to 'keep their flight suits zipped up'. They flew with each other, reviewed their highlights reels, and talked about the 'good old days' in 'Nam, Thailand, Korea, and the PI. He was ordered to limit his exploits to off-base talent – local burned out booze hounds that were eager to get their hands on a handsome and mature lover that would take them away from their lives of dreadful boredom and their high school sweethearts and ex-husbands that still went to high school football games on Friday night. The snake was told that he had 'two strikes' and he knew that the line was drawn. Thirty-two, he thought. He had bedded and broken thirty-two young brides, not two. His reign was over, and he crushed the butt under the heel of his flying boot.

So, Ranger got 'schooled' by the best – one of the best at least. For Ranger's eleven-month training program, the lesson found fertile ground, the seed was planted. His pretty blonde wife was back in St. Louis and the honeymoon was over. After four months, her confused parents helped her file papers to end the marriage that 'didn't work out'. The next six months included Ranger's T-37 and T-38 cross-country flights to Scott Air Force Base near the Missouri state line to meet with and to feign attempts at reconciliation with his wife. They were still married.

The last two months dragged on until the week before Ranger graduated from pilot training. He was successful in hanging on for a year. Not hanging on to his wife and marriage, though. Ranger was successful in hanging on to his on-base house that he was only eligible for as a married officer and student pilot. He hung on to the married officer's quarters until he was a week from graduation. He had transformed the house into an on-base snake ranch that was used as 'party central' and used to entertain his fellow pilots, their wives and girlfriends, and the pretty women that they set him up with to help him get over being abandoned by his bride so soon after their honeymoon.

The other students' wives thought that he was divorced and a 'saint' for being the one abandoned, not the one doing the abandoning. His buddies and the housing office knew that he was still married, the only way he was still eligible for on-base quarters. The legend was quietly nurtured until the week before graduation, when he presented the housing office with a copy of the divorce decree – signed three days earlier by a county judge in Missouri. The newly promoted junior clerk, nodded and advised him that he was required to vacate base housing in thirty days. Ranger nodded and reported that the travel office had notified the moving company to pick up his household goods for transfer to Fighter Lead-in at Holloman. He would be out of the house next Wednesday and had already scheduled an out-processing inspection for Thursday. He would spend the night with Mustang and his wife Thursday night, graduate Friday morning and start the drive for Miami and water survival on Friday afternoon.

Just like the ice cream man that had been abused and became the abuser, Ranger was shattered by the tradecraft of a top-shelf hedonist, then became a student of the art himself. By the time

Ranger hit Miami, he was on the prowl. By the time water survival was over there were three pretty Florida women who were packing their bags for what they were led to believe was Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. Ranger left Florida without saying ‘goodbye’. If any of the three were stalkers, they could look for him in Dakota, but he was headed for New Mexico. None followed, and Ranger never looked back.

That was number one for Ranger. Number two came on his first overseas assignment following RTU. An American DoD schoolteacher assigned to his base in England. She witnessed his transition in his call sign from Ranger to Keebler. Boys will be boys, she thought. She thought the call signs were silly and immature. She was gorgeous but oblivious to Keebler’s extracurricular activities. She dismissed the occasional suspicion.

Number two was bumped by number three – the Fox – the slender vixen and American daughter of a GI and a PI native. An American by birth under the status of forces agreement. The Fox played him like a Stradivarius. Under her spell, Ranger now called ‘Keebler’ filed papers to divorce the DoD school teacher after they – Keebler and his number two wife - both agreed that she would accept a posting to the DoD school in Kaiserslautern, West Germany; and he would work a deal with his buddies at the personnel center. A follow-on assignment to Ramstein, he promised. Wife number two took the DoD school posting to Germany, Keebler reported for duty at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada – the ‘Home of the Fighter Pilot’.

‘The needs of the Air Force,’ he informed her in a letter with no return address.

Once at Nellis, the Fox transformed herself into the OWC wife-of-the-year and pestered Keebler to bring her grandparents, sisters, and cousins to the ‘States’ to live off base

with them. The Fox could get anything she wanted from Keebler. Once she got what she wanted, she kicked him to the curb. Who could blame her – he was sixteen years her senior. Irreconcilable differences indeed. Keebler signed the papers.

By the time the third marriage was over, Keebler was a confirmed hedonist with skill sets and tradecraft that would last a lifetime. He had the respect and admiration of the flight crews, married and single. The wives avoided him, that suited him – they were off limits anyway. Two officers' wives club members whispered to each other that Keebler was a 'bad hombre' and that endeared him to his squadron mates even more. Some seasoned tarts confessed that they would 'drop their knickers for Keebler', but they would never dare try. He was respected and feared, a hot stick, and a regular on the DO's Top Gun roster. He was selected for instructor duty, four-ship flight lead, Red Flag live drop lead, and Fighter Weapons School. He was a stud.

By the time Keebler pinned on Lieutenant Colonel rank, his former flight commander was a below-the-zone Colonel at the puzzle palace. Three years later, they were both Colonels headed for New Mexico to take over as Wing King and DO. Both had sponsors that spoke for them and orchestrated the assignments that brought them together. They were grooming the new Wing King for Brigadier. The Commander was expected to keep Keebler on his wing and eventually sponsor him for flag officer. That was the plan, but a grave misfortune hit the base on the weekend that began with the fleet diverting to Nellis, after the fog monster rolled in and covered the base.



Grillo snapped awake, the last of the Class of '73 was walking across the stage. All salutes were rendered and returned.

All stood, awaiting the declaration. Grillo's blood began pumping again.

Hats flew.

Ten General Electric J-79 turbojet engines roared over the top of the Press Box headed eastbound. The 'fight' was on.



Grillo and his classmates scrambled to pick up the two-degree shoulder boards that the Commandant's staff was dumping from cardboard boxes from the open windows of the press box.

"There you go boys," the Green Onion laughed an evil laugh. "There's plenty for everyone," he howled. "Have a nice summer," he scowled bitterly, then looked down.

Grillo looked up and caught the Green Onion's eye.

He shook his fist at the Marine Colonel and swore to himself that he'd fix his wagon. *But good*, he thought. *But good next year.*

## SONG OF THE DAY

### Our Bus

I'll kick the tires and you light the fires,  
In that big-block engine of mine;

Oh, Oh Oh, Our Bus is a very, very, very fine bus,  
With two tanks for the gas,  
Accelerates so fast ha-hast,  
Now everything is peachy, climb on-board,  
Climb on-board;

What a course we had,  
The trainer was a total badass,  
Made us run the track so fast,  
The accelerator gas, Oh la la la  
Now everything is sailing right on by,  
Bye, bye, bye;

The safety briefing too,  
Asked us about all the steps we knew,  
To save the pas-sen-gers, lads and lasses too,  
From dangers that we knew - were waiting 'round the bend,  
Yes, right around the bend – my friends;

Back at the depot now, they ask us how we did it,  
How Oh How, and safely too, for me 'n you,  
Refrain

You kick the tires, and I'll light the fires,  
In that big-block engine of mi – mi – mine.

### Our Bus

The Seegram Seven Chorale, with  
The Cadet Chapel Guide Chorus

*(Sung to the melody of Our House by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young)*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Francis E. McIntire is a Proposal Manager and Safety Evangelist, flew F-111A and F-111D models at Nellis AFB, Las Vegas; Mtn Home AFB, Idaho; and RAF Upper Heyford, England. He flew Top Gun, Red Flag, and Sailor Creek Range missions with the RAAF F-111C Aardvark crews from Canberra, NSW and Royal Air Force crew members from RAF Coningsby and RAF Lossiemouth. McIntire earned his BS degree from the USAF Academy and earned his MS degree from Vanderbilt University, and taught Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at the USAF Academy.

McIntire's first book, *Educated Blackjack*, was published in 1977. From 1983 to present he wrote, published, and promoted instruction & technical manuals; a college scholarship guide; strategic planning and program management handbooks; veteran business guides; novels & fictional biographies, and began work on the *Amazing Leaders* series, and the *Monty Post* series.

As an Air Force cadet, he served as Squadron Safety Non-Commissioned Officer and Cadet Training Officer specializing in Air Force ground and air safety, sports- and automotive safety.

As a commissioned officer, he served as Squadron Safety Officer for the 79<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron, Upper Heyford, United Kingdom. Chief of Operations, F-111 Instructor Pilot, Red Flag Flight Lead, Quality Assurance, and the Functional Check Flight branch at Royal Air Force Upper Heyford in the UK, Frank was the Commanders' advocate for safe operations in the air and on the ground. As Deputy Commander and Deputy Director for Air Force Quality Assurance, Frank led the 80-person global consulting agency for organizational development and business transformation worldwide.

Frank inculcated Ground & Air Safety and Security for: the Battle of Britain Airshow (1989-1990); launch of the Air Force Quality Institute (1992-1995); the Quality Air Force Symposium

(1993-1995); the Inspector General visit (1994-1995); the Peacekeeper Missile Action Workout (1995-1996); the Total Army Quality launch (1996-1998); the online Operational Test Program Management system (1999-2002); the Resource Allocation Management Plan (2001-2003); the Fort Carson Strategic Plan (2004); the Oracle National Security Strategic Plan and Conference (2005-2006); Oracle RDBMS, RAC, and ERP Federal Financial projects (2005-2007); the Veterans Affairs financial center (2007-2008); the HHS data center fit out (2007-2010); the ECP management for enterprise IT infrastructure projects (2009-present), and other projects along the way using MS Project and Sciforma Project Scheduler for planning, tracking, and reporting.

Frank's leadership in IT systems security and cybersecurity include DoD and Intelligence Community system upgrades and implementations for network, storage, and database; and to support imagery deployment and exploitation for U.S. and coalition forces worldwide. These include DoD branches, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), conformance with DISA Security Technical Information Guides (STIGs), Department of State, and the broad U.S. Intelligence Community.

At Amentum, McIntire leads the way for development and delivery of Safety Moments for meetings and conference calls large and small. His extensive portfolio of current, new, and innovative Safety Moments includes online data, safety content of open source safety curriculum, and vast experience with military and commercial safety lessons-learned and best practices. Frank has earned a reputation of delivering Safety Moments that are practical, memorable, and enjoyable.

Frank's works can be found on Amazon by searching 'Francis E. McIntire' (Kindle by searching 'Francis McIntire'). Frank can be reached at **(719) 651-7746**, or **frank@golzup.com**.

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