

# Stupid Driving decisions

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**Integrity**  
means doing the  
right thing when  
others are not  
looking!

I'd like to share with you two incidents involving a few airmen assigned to Beale, and the antics they pulled while driving their personal vehicles.

Situation No. 1: I was riding off base with two other noncommissioned officers. As we departed the gate, two vehicles passed us at an extremely high speed. On top of this, they passed us in a no-passing zone where the road curved with limited vision of oncoming traffic.

The driver of our vehicle, a Beale first sergeant, motioned for them to slow down and pull over. The drivers accelerated and continued to pass each other on this bumpy and poorly maintained road as traffic continued to come at them from the opposite direction. As we entered the next town, we noticed both vehicles passing the school/park area where the speed limit is 25 mph. Children were playing in the park when we witnessed one of the vehicles overtake the other one again.

The traffic on the highway was very heavy as we made our turn to head south. Coming out of town, we noticed the two vehicles were also held up by traffic and had just made their way onto the highway. We wrote

down their license plates, and later they were identified as active duty airmen assigned to Beale.

These airmen will now lose their base driving privileges, face possible Article 15s, and possible discharge from the Air Force.

Situation No 2: While coming home from another town, a young man directly in front of my van executed a wheelie on his motorcycle and accelerated down the road while a number of cars passed him in the westbound lane.

He was going so fast I barely had time to dial the law enforcement desk before he made it to the gate. He either maintained the same wheelie for an extremely long period or performed several wheelies down the road at speeds between 65 and 80 mph. He was detained at the gate, and I had a nice, long talk with him. He admitted his wrongdoing and apologized. He had a history of similar behavior and was forewarned any other violations would result in the loss of his base driving privileges. I told him I would notify his first sergeant the next morning.

During the past 5 months, I have performed four critical-incident stress-management debriefs for people

involved in traumatic or fatal motor vehicle accidents. Every one of them wished he or she could turn the clock back and change at least one small event that may have made the difference in keeping the accident from occurring.

The individuals mentioned in the above situations showed a complete disregard for their safety and the public's safety. In either situation, a blown tire, a mechanical failure, a bird strike, or any other event could have occurred, and we would be dealing with the loss of at least one life.

This is unacceptable! I spoke with two of the three vehicle operators. Both are ashamed and remorseful for what they did, and they are not fans of mine right now. But, talking about professionalism and good decision making is much easier than counseling grief, the loss of a life they were responsible for, or attending their funeral or memorial service.

Remember, driving is a privilege you should not take lightly. Irresponsible driving can affect not only you, but also other drivers traveling the same roads. So, if you decide to risk it all on bad driving practices, remember your next illegal pass or wheelie may be your last. ▶