

Not Your Typical Afternoon

By Ann Jensis-Dale
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Last March, Air Force Capt. Brian Walburn, DCMA Boeing Seattle, thought he was in for a typical afternoon commute on his way home via Interstate Five northbound from McChord Air Force Base near Seattle.

According to Walburn, it was the late-afternoon rush hour, when stop-and-go traffic is common. "It was one of those 'everybody-brakes-hard' events. I thought it was probably someone trying to change five lanes at once a half-hour earlier or something," said Walburn. Then, all of a sudden, Walburn saw an automobile three car lengths ahead of his careening to the right across traffic on its side, as he remained stationary in the left lane.

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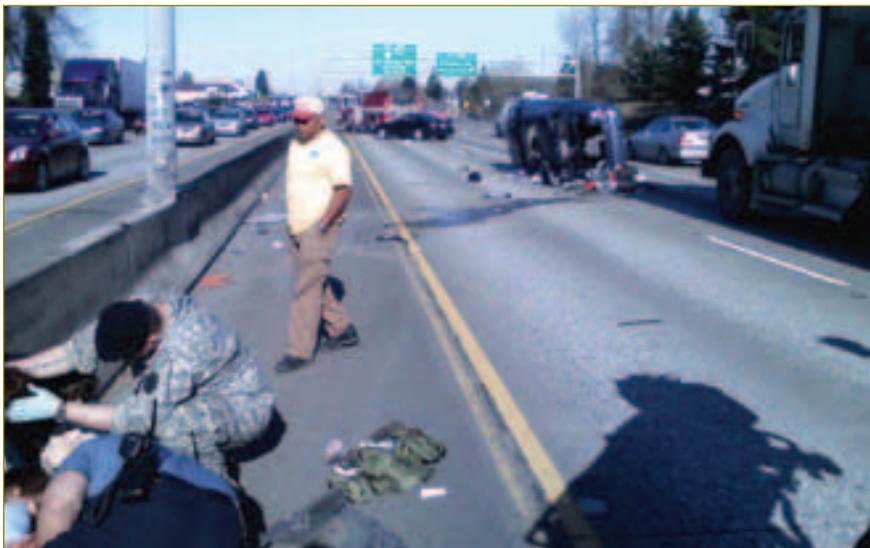
— Brian Walburn

Walburn immediately pulled his vehicle over to the left-hand shoulder, jumped out of his car and ran to the ravaged automobile. "There was a driver still in the vehicle with two young children, ages two and three, in the back seat," he said. "The driver and one of the children were bleeding very badly from head injuries. They were all stuck in the car and could not get out."

Walburn leaned in through the window, shut the car engine off and

attended to the passengers' head wounds. The next thing he knew, a few Army personnel and a truck driver arrived at the scene to assist. "We decided to remove everyone from the car since it was leaking gas, and we were all worried about the possibility of an explosion or fire," Walburn said. "Everyone was still conscious but appeared to be in very bad shape."

Walburn, the Army personnel and the truck driver went through the



Air Force Capt. Brian Walburn, DCMA Boeing Seattle, Army personnel and a truck driver attend to victims of a car accident on Seattle's I-5. (Photos courtesy of Brian Walburn)



Air Force Capt. Brian Walburn was the first person to aid victims of a severe car accident on Seattle's I-5.



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The passengers in the car accident were a woman and two toddlers. Walburn believes that, "In the end, everyone came out of this pretty good."

car trunk, ripped out the back seat and cut the seat belts to free the trapped passengers. The group then lifted and passed the children out through the sunroof. Once everyone was out, they stayed with the injured passengers, keeping pressure on their wounds and ensuring they remained conscious.

The police and ambulance crews arrived on the scene approximately 15 minutes after the heroes removed the passengers from the vehicle. Walburn continued to assist and called the driver's husband to inform him of the accident, telling him everyone was safe and at what hospital they were located. "I think, in the end, everyone came out of this pretty good. Hopefully maybe just a concussion or two and a totaled car," Walburn remarked. **C**