Top 10 must-read posts from February

Kasey Panetta, Associate Editor

Here's a rundown of the most read, most popular, most awesome articles on the web. Take a look at what you missed the first time around or check up on an old favorite to see the conversation in the comments. Keep checking out the Lead at www.ecnmag.com [1] and follow us on Twitter @ecnonline for our most up-to-date articles.

[2]

1. Iranian "stealth fighter" looks like a clown car [2]
By Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor
When Iran released pictures of a new stealth fighter called the 'Qaher 313', they were almost immediately debunked as either a full-scale mockup or completely photoshopped images. Rudimentary wiring, commercial-based control and an apparently non-existent engine all raised suspicion about the "clown car" of a fighter.

2. Beer: The next great alternative energy source [3]
By Kasey Panetta, Associate Editor
Forget solar power. The future of energy is beer power. With the help of a government grant, the Alaskan Brewing company purchased a 1.8 million dollar furnace outfitted to burn spent grain, creating steam, which can power most of the brewing process eliminating most of the logistical problems for a frontier brewery. It will also offset energy costs by 70 percent per year.

3. Iranian clown car flies ... with the help of Photoshop [4]
By Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor
The suspicious Qaher 313 became even sketchier after Iran released images of the stealth fighter "flying." The problem is they used an easily-searched, stock image of a mountain for a background and pasted the plane in. Not very convincing.

[5]4. Enfeebled F-35 could impede military readiness [5]

By Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

With the recent release of the FY2012 Director of Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) report, which recommended reducing performance requirements, especially transonic acceleration and sustained g-forces, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter became another victim in the world of failed aircraft.

[6]5. The greatest use of (bus stop) technology ever [6]

By Kasey Panetta, Associate Editor

Qualcomm took on the challenge of making bus stop advertisements fun and interactive and knocked it out the park with an ad that used a website to surprise the rider with anything from a bus full of puppies to a full blow circus act.

6. What Walter Cronkite thought 2001 would look like [7]

By Kasey Panetta, Associate editor

Predictions about the future are always fun to watch decades later — particularly if they star Mr. Walter Cronkite in a March 12, 1967 episode of the CBS show "The 21st Century" depicting what life would look like in 2001. This video is interesting because of how close he strays to the truth with his predictions about the 21st century living room. Obviously, it's all the basic context of the late '60s with regards to aesthetics, but it's pretty dead on when it comes to the tough stuff.

7. Rethinking wind power [8]
By Eurekalert!
Though it's been assumed that wind power, when perfected, would be a viable solution, recent studies show that the potential for large-scale wind farms might have been overestimated. The studies show, "generating capacity of very large wind power installations (larger than 100 square kilometers) may peak at between 0.5 and 1 watts per square meter." Good news for critics, bad news for supporters.

8. Space shuttle Columbia's second life - as a cautionary tale [9]
By Irene Klotz, Reuters
As the 10th anniversary of Columbia's crash came and went, so did discussions about lessons to be learned from the doomed space craft. The wreckage, preserved at the Kennedy Space shelter, offers a unique lesson on the importance of safety and learning how much damage falling foam could do.

9. Jay Leno test drives Army vehicle [10]
By Cherish Washington, AMC Public Affairs
Jay Leno's Garage, an internet show hosted by the popular late-night personality, focused on the Fuel Efficient Demonstrator, the vehicle with a supercharged, turbocharged, inline, four cylinder diesel engine that produces 200 horsepower and 568 foot pounds of torque. Impressive. The tactical lightweight vehicle impressed the host with its turning radius and brakes in addition to increased fuel efficiency.

10. Do drone pilots deserve higher medal than combat vets? [11]
By Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor
With the recent addition of the newly-minted Distinguished Warfare Medal – created for drone pilots—came a new controversy about whether the medal should rank above the valor-in- combat Purple Heart and Bronze Star. The newest addition, which will not be awarded for valor in combat, seeks to deal with a new type of hero

while respecting the honor of combat soldiers. However ranking the medal above the time-honored Purple Heart and Bronze Star might have been a mistake.

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