

The event occurred in 1949 at Edwards Air Force Base, Muroc, California, during Air Force Project MX981. This was Col. J.P. Stapp's experimental crash research testing. The work was being accomplished by Northrop Aircraft, under contract from the Aero Medical Lab at Wright Field. I was the Northrop's project manager.

Capt. Ed Murphy was a development engineer for Wright Field Aircraft Lab. Frustrated with a strap transducer which was malfunctioning due to an error in wiring the strain gage bridges caused him to remark - If there is any way to do it wrong, he will - referring to the technician who had wired the bridges at the lab. I assigned Murphy's law to the statement and the associated variations.

A couple of weeks after the naming Col. Stapp indicated, at a press conference, that our fine safety record during several years of simulated crash force testing was the result of a firm belief in Murphy's Law, and our consistent effort to deny the inevitable. Several companies started using this in their commercials. Murphy's Law was now established and spreading fast.

Sincerely
George E Nicholas
Reliability Quality Assurance Manager

Viking Project
Jet propulsion Lab – NASA