

HUNTING SAFETY: TAKE A 'STAND'

KNOWLEDGE

VOL 6 AUGUST 2012

OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY

WHEN THE PLAN CHANGES

- HAND INJURIES
- FOD PREVENTION
- SEAT BELTS



ARMY STRONG.



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THIS MONTH
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SAFETY
FEATURES



FROM THE
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U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

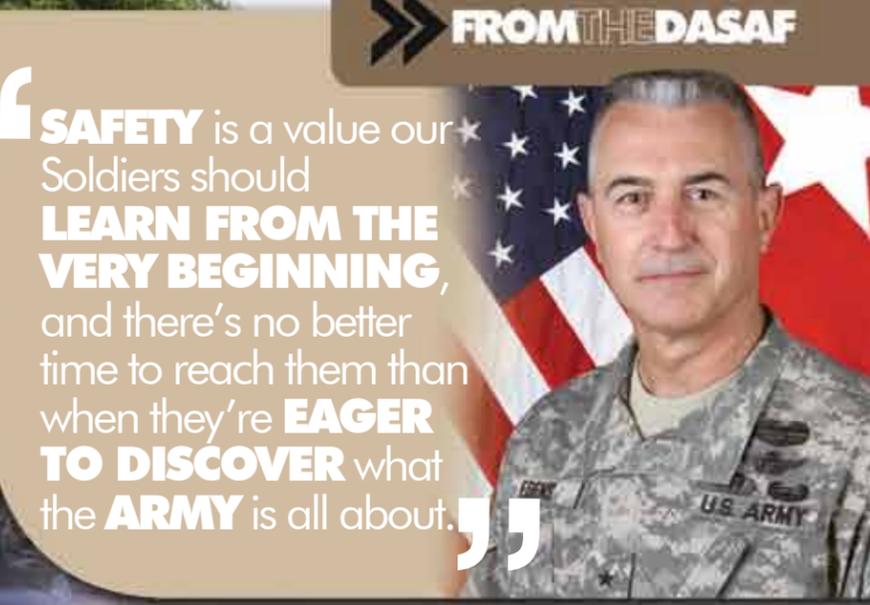
- Brig. Gen. Timothy J. Edens Commander/Director of Army Safety
- Command Sgt. Maj. Richard D. Stidley Command Sergeant Major
- Michael J. Negard Director, Strategic Communication
- Chris Frazier Managing Editor
- Bob Van Elsberg Writer/Editor
- Paula Allman Writer/Editor
- Lori Yerdon Writer/Editor
- Blake Grantham Graphic Design
- Taryn Gillespie Graphic Design

Mission statement: The United States Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center (USACR/Safety Center) supports our Army by collecting, analyzing and communicating actionable information to assist Leaders, Soldiers, Families and Civilians in preserving/protecting our Army's combat resources.

We welcome your feedback. Please email comments to safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil.

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“SAFETY is a value our Soldiers should **LEARN FROM THE VERY BEGINNING**, and there’s no better time to reach them than when they’re **EAGER TO DISCOVER** what the **ARMY** is all about.”

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Coming into any new job is an adventure, and in our Army, you’d better be prepared to hit the ground running. In my short time as the new director of Army Safety and commanding general of the USACR/Safety Center, I’ve been sprinting! I never imagined how busy and rewarding these first couple of months would be, and I want to commend you all for the incredible work you’ve done to keep accidental fatalities at historic lows these past few years. I couldn’t have asked for better teachers than the leaders, Soldiers, Family members and Civilians doing the hard work for safety every day — thank you for being a wonderful example for me to follow.

I didn’t come into this position with a grand vision for how things should be; we’re obviously on the right track with fatalities on a sustained downward trajectory. But there are a few issues that caught my attention immediately, and I’d like to share my thoughts on those now. Some are recurring problems, while others are just

beginning to emerge as a verifiable trend. The one commonality among them, though, is that they all require our urgent attention.

Loss of leaders in privately owned motorcycle accidents. This subject has been a priority for Army leadership for quite some time, but the fact remains that just as our most recent third quarter was ending, well

over half of this year’s motorcycle fatalities were NCOs. In the July 2012 Knowledge, CSM Rick Stidley wrote that bad decisions at the top tend to trickle down to the lowest level, even in formations as small as a squad. I completely agree with his position — no one is immune to indiscipline, especially young Soldiers who look to their leaders for guidance and

wisdom. There’s no excuse and no room in our Army for leaders who don’t live what right looks like.

A disproportionate share of specialists involved in privately owned vehicle and POM accidents. I saw lots of data my first few days on the job, and this was among the most startling: Up to the end of the third quarter of fiscal 2012, specialists accounted for more than half of all POV fatalities and about a third of all POM losses. Even more alarming, indiscipline, primarily excessive speeding, was cited in many of these accident reports. Something is wrong when Soldiers who’ve been in the Army long enough to know the standards and are getting ready to assume leadership roles outnumber privates two-to-one in fatal accidents. Whether it’s due to the toxic effects of indiscipline leadership or simply a matter of individual failure to uphold the standards, we have to break the cycle and reach these Soldiers now to not only save lives, but also prevent them from entering the NCO ranks with an unmitigated, high-risk attitude.

Keeping safety professionals in the field. The current professionalization and training of our Army’s safety professionals, both uniformed and Civilian, is

unprecedented. At no prior time have commanders had the breadth and depth of safety expertise in their formations as now, but I have concerns some of that knowledge may remain untapped. We can’t pay lip service to safety — commanders must make it a priority, and the best place to start is with the safety professional. These men and women have been trained to be your advocate, advisor and counselor on all things safety, and not tapping into that potential does both them and your Soldiers a disservice. I promise that, if given the chance, they will become an indispensable part of your go-to staff!

Applying risk management in the schoolhouse. We’ve gotten much better as an Army at teaching the “cradle to grave” model of risk management in initial-entry training and leader development courses. Now that the complete operational drawdown of combat forces is near, we have a fantastic opportunity to take those efforts even further. Safety is a value our Soldiers should learn from the very beginning, and there’s no better time to reach them than when they’re eager to discover what the Army is all about.

You might be missing the “how” to fix these issues, and quite honestly,

I don’t have an answer yet. No one solution will work for every Soldier or unit; that’s why the broad concepts of engagement, training, discipline and standards have worked so well for us — leaders can mold them to their Soldiers’ unique needs and circumstances. I welcome your feedback on what we’ve done and where we need to go in the future. No one is in this fight alone!

Finally, remember that with the dwindling days of summer here, many of your Soldiers will be taking last-minute vacations. Please caution them to be extra careful on the road and in the water, the two places they’re most likely to get into trouble. Our first and most important mission is to make sure everyone makes it home, every time.

It’s an honor to be here, and I look forward to serving with you in the exciting days ahead. Thank you again for all your hard work and support! ◀

TIMOTHY J. EDENS
Brigadier General, USA
Director of Army Safety



Lost Digits?

MICHAEL WOOD
Ground Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Climbing on or off Army equipment sounds easy enough, and Soldiers accomplish this task daily without injury. However, those who don't complete this task safely are risking a severe hand injury or possibly even the amputation of a finger.

My first experience with a dismounting accident happened many years ago at Fort Polk, La. I had just completed the first six months of the U.S. Army Safety and Occupational Health Management Program and returned to my home station to begin my on-the-job training portion of the intern program. One day, I was alone in the safety office when I got the call that a Soldier had an accident while dismounting a 5-ton truck. I reached for my notebook and the office camera and headed to the motor pool to investigate my first accident.

When I arrived to the scene, witnesses told me the Soldier had been replacing the canvas on the truck and, as he dismounted, his ring finger got caught on something and was torn off. I

walked into the parking lot and found the 5-ton. As I started my investigation, I saw something red on the top of a bolt that held the side-view mirror onto the truck. As I got a closer look, I realized the red object was part of the Soldier's finger! I looked on the top of the canvas and saw skin that had once covered the Soldier's now-severed finger.

The Soldier had placed his hand on top of the mirror when he jumped down from the 5-ton's hood. As he did, his wedding ring snagged on the mirror bolt, pulling off the skin and launching it on top of the canvas. The Soldier went to the hospital without his finger and, since it lay baking in the hot Louisiana sun, surgeons would not have been able to reattach it. I will always remember this accident. I imagine the Soldier does, too, each time he looks down at his missing finger.

In the Army, there's large equipment that must be mounted and dismounted to

accomplish many different tasks. Soldiers must always be aware of fall hazards, especially when climbing onto or off equipment during maintenance or while securing equipment during transport. When dismounting, Soldiers must be careful where they put their hands and feet. In addition to degloved or amputated fingers, Soldiers can also suffer twisted or broken ankles, along with injuries to their legs, knees, wrists, arms and upper body.

So what can you — as a leader, battle buddy or Soldier — do to prevent these types of injuries? Here are a few tips:

- Use extreme caution when mounting or dismounting a vehicle. Never dismount a vehicle by jumping from it.
- Ensure you understand and use the three points of contact method when mounting, dismounting or moving around on the vehicle. This means

»» DID YOU KNOW?

The Army had 13 Class B accidents between fiscal 2008 – 2011 caused by improper mounting and dismounting procedures. All 13 accidents resulted in the amputation of fingers or the tips of fingers. Of those, nine involved Soldiers wearing wedding rings that got caught on equipment. To learn more about the hazards your equipment may present, go to the Driver's Training Toolbox at <https://safety.army.mil/drivertrainingtoolbox> (AKO login required).





- having two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand on the equipment at all times.
- Break three points of contact only when you reach the ground, cab, turret or a stable platform.
- Use the parts designed by the manufacturer for mounting and dismounting — steps, running boards, traction strips, footholds, handgrips, etc., — and keep these parts clear of mud, snow, grease and other hazards that can cause slips, trips or falls.
- Do not use wheel hubs, machine tracks or door handles for mounting and dismounting.
- Ensure the driver or gunner is aware when personnel are mounting or dismounting the vehicle.
- Never mount or dismount a moving vehicle. Drivers must bring the vehicle to a complete stop before allowing anyone to mount or dismount.
- Never climb in front of a weapon to mount the vehicle.
- Wear protective gloves.◀

“ **SOLDIERS** must always be **AWARE** of fall **HAZARDS**, especially when climbing **ONTO** or **OFF** equipment during maintenance or while securing **EQUIPMENT** during transport. ”

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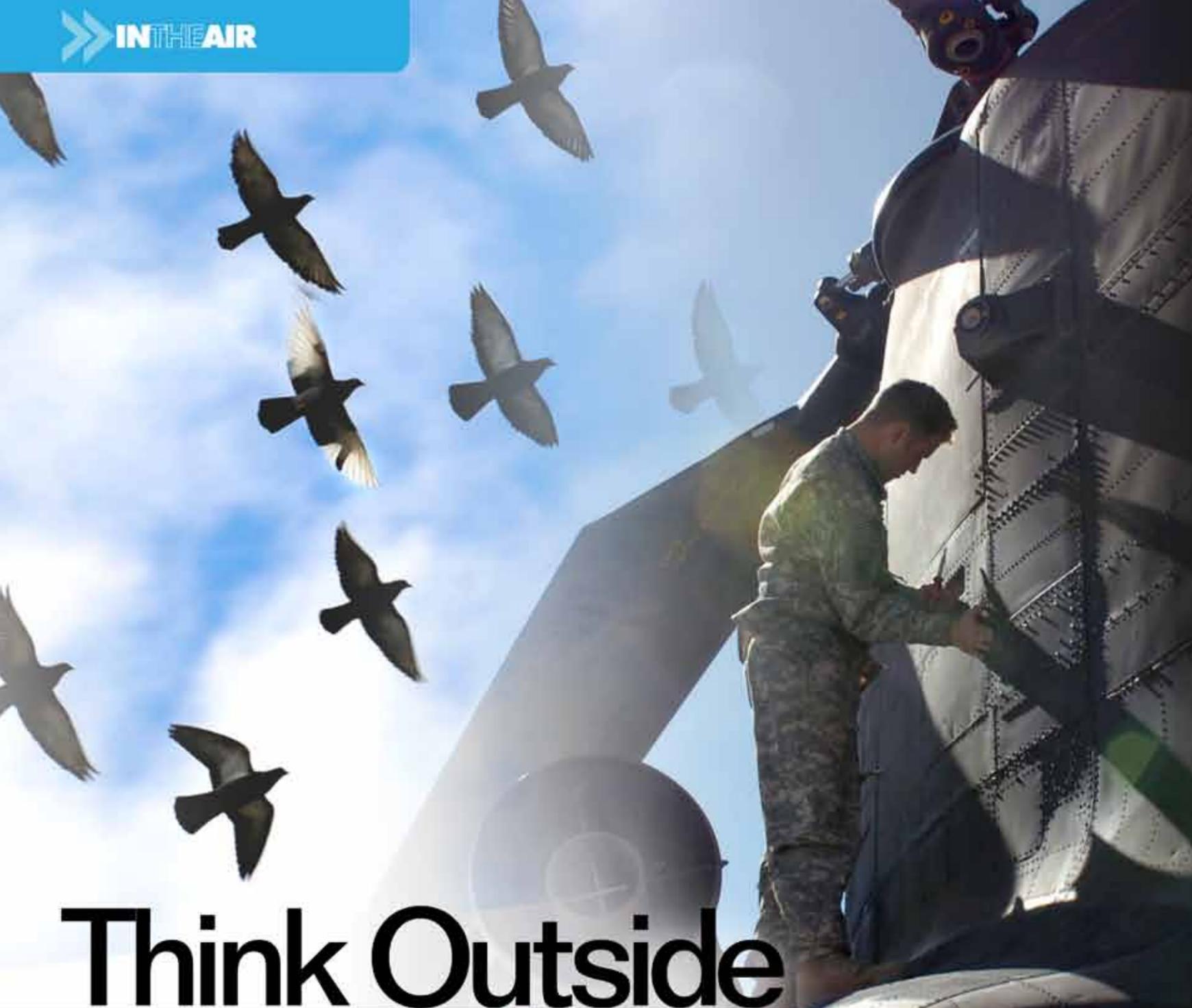
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ARMY STRONG U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS SAFETY CENTER ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG BAND OF BROTHERS & SISTERS



Foreign object damage is an important program to Army aviation. FOD prevention is mandated by DA Pam 385-10, which states FOD prevention programs will be in writing, all unit personnel will be trained in FOD prevention (paragraph 2-8b.) and FOD prevention will be discussed at all unit safety meetings (paragraph 2-8 d. (1)(c)). Army aviation units are doing well to implement these programs and meet the regulatory guidance; however, many publications don't address real-world challenges. It's necessary for units to thoroughly analyze their specific FOD-related hazards and respond to them to mitigate damage and injury.

As a troop FOD officer deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom last year, I learned many things are different in a combat environment. At home, aircraft were always in a hangar and roads were paved. Not so in Afghanistan. In garrison, arming was done in a controlled area where

or exhaust pillow in the way, the birds assumed it was fair game. They nested in cockpits, avionics compartments and even engine exhaust cowlings. As a result, unit standing operating procedures evolved and controls minimized the occurrences, but nothing was perfect. One summer day, after

verified the pillow had not been installed. However, I haphazardly inspected the exhaust, which is where the bird's nest was located! It was an interesting sight for the attending crew chief on that start. Flames and sparks shot out of the exhaust and caused the crew chief to signal me to abort the start.

“ A little **SCARE** went a **LONG** way to **TEACH** us a good **FOD** program is as **FLEXIBLE** and **ADAPTIVE** as it is rooted to **ARMY** regulation. ”

Think Outside the **FOD** Box

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 JOEL M. GARZELLONI
4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment,
16th Combat Aviation Brigade
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

dunnage could be closely monitored. In Afghanistan, it is done in parking or while refueling by pilots in a hurry to launch for a mission (or to make it back for chow). At home, no trooper could go home until he or she conducted a FOD walk. During deployments, troopers worked multiple shifts with sparse crews. The list goes on and on.

So what happens when you're thrown a curveball? One such curveball was the enterprising bird population on our forward operating base. If there wasn't a door

flying about two hours at the beginning of our mission window, I made the decision to not install an exhaust pillow. I wasn't being defiant to troop SOPs; I made the call in hopes of the engine cooling down quicker. We were on quick-reaction force status and scheduled to fly later in the shift. The birds never crossed my mind. Unfortunately, they didn't cross my mind an hour later either when we were rushing to launch in support of ground troops in contact.

While doing my thorough flight checks, I visually

Guys came running from all over the flight line. Thankfully, the aircraft wasn't damaged, and we quickly continued the mission. Unfortunately, the bird didn't fare so well.

A close call, but no damage. It was a great way to learn a lesson. A little scare went a long way to teach us a good FOD program is as flexible and adaptive as it is rooted to Army regulation. This trooper went on to respond to the hazard that presented itself, and I never again started an aircraft without a thorough inspection of the exhaust.◀



BRINGING LEADERS INTO RIDER TRAINING

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

The process Soldiers use to get their required motorcycling and driving training will change with the coming of the new fiscal year. Since 2007, Soldiers have used AIRS, or the Army IMCOM Registration System, to sign up for the driving and motorcycle riding training provided under the Army Traffic Safety Training Program. Performed under contract for the Army's Installation Management Command, AIRS allowed Soldiers to self-register by going to an online site, search for the training they wanted and then apply for it. The system allowed safety offices to plan riding and driving training, recognizing the needs of Soldiers at installations worldwide. However, after the contract supporting AIRS ends Oct. 1, the Army has to find another way to ensure Soldiers get the needed training. And the Army didn't have to look far for an effective solution that included the Soldiers' leadership into the process.

The Army will migrate back to the Digital Training Management System, an existing scheduling and tracking tool. Used for years to plan and track individual Soldier training, DTMS now has a POV Licensing Tab. The same DTMS mechanisms Soldiers used in the past to schedule and annotate weapons qualification on the range will now also schedule and track them on the road. And going back to the "old" way has its pluses, according to Charlie Ostrand, DTMS technical branch chief. He and Jimmy Sawyer, Headquarters IMCOM safety manager at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, have worked closely to make this a smooth and effective transition. It's one that carries the benefits Soldiers had under AIRS — free training and a clear understanding of the standards — while adding leader involvement when Soldiers need to take required training.

No longer will Soldiers hand carry — and potentially lose — their training records when moving to a new assignment. Ostrand said, "They just show up at their next unit when the personnel system assigns them there. Then the unit can view their training record and update

what they've done, where they're going and what they're doing."

Ostrand explained that Walt Beckman of the Driving Directorate at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center played a key role in this transition. Beckman, a member of the Army Traffic Safety work group, approached Ostrand back in 2010 about the idea. He recognized DTMS had the capability to absorb the mission formerly done under AIRS. In the process, DTMS — being a web-based system — offered some very tangible benefits. Beckman realized that using DTMS would bring continuity to the Soldiers' training records, allowing units to better respond to their needs for riding training.

And there was another essential element DTMS brought to safety training.

"What Beckman was so astute at seeing was that safety is a command responsibility in the Army," Ostrand said. "So safety training — making people aware of safety issues and ensuring people are safe in the way they do things — becomes a command problem."



This was important because under AIRS, leaders referred the Soldier to someone else if there was a problem with their training. At that point, leaders lost sight of the process, not knowing whether their Soldier's needs were met or not. Using DTMS eliminates that problem.

The automated system allows leaders to quickly recognize when there is a problem with their Soldier's training. This, Ostrand said, makes it possible for Soldiers

to get their chain of command engaged much more effectively should problems arise. Also, leaders are better able to monitor their Soldiers' progress, ensuring they get the required follow-on training at the proper intervals. Being web-based, DTMS allows both instructors and leaders to verify Soldiers attend the training.

One challenge is ensuring all training recorded in the AIRS program gets transitioned into DTMS so Soldiers receive credit

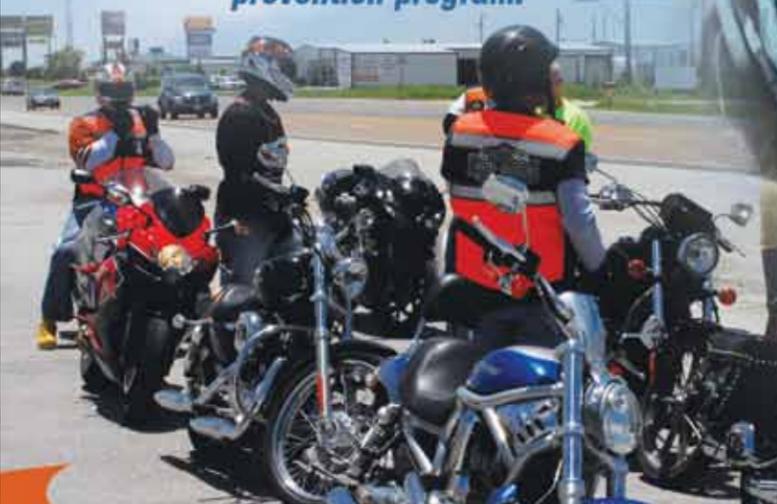
for past training. This could be important for a Soldier who lost their motorcycle training card during the transition. However, the changeover is going well, according to Ostrand. He credits the cooperation provided by Headquarters IMCOM for making it possible to test the new DTMS program at Fort Hood, Texas, and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Sometimes there is wisdom in walking down familiar trails. By adapting DTMS to managing Soldiers' riding and driving training records, the Army has saved itself a lot of time and money, according to Ostrand. Most of the training provided to unit leadership and installation safety officers to use DTMS was accomplished over the phone. This made the transition very cost effective. And in today's Army, saving lives and money are both vital goals.◀

“The same **DTMS** mechanisms **SOLDIERS** used in the past to **SCHEDULE** and **ANNOTATE** weapons qualification on the range will now also schedule and **TRACK** them on the **ROAD.**”

RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

The Motorcycle Mentorship Program establishes voluntary installation-level motorcycle associations where less experienced riders and seasoned riders can create a supportive environment of responsible motorcycle riding and enjoyment. This can create positive conduct and behavior and serve as a force multiplier that supports a commander's motorcycle accident prevention program.




MMP
MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the **USACR/Safety Center MMP** website for some examples of active mentoring programs.

<https://safety.army.mil/mmp/>



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Too Close FOR COMFORT



1ST LT. CUTHBERT CHRISTOPHER
110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion
Georgia Army National Guard
Tifton, Ga.

Editor's note: The names used in this article are fictitious to protect the Soldiers' privacy.

I'd been in country for several months in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom when my unit was tasked to conduct missions with coalition forces. Sgt. Smith, who was the unit's supply sergeant, and I immediately volunteered for the mission. I wasn't permitted to go because of my position as the motor sergeant and, initially, Smith wasn't able to participate either. However, the command eventually relented and allowed Smith to go.

Once the missions began, Smith was gone for days at a time. When he returned, he usually had some unused ammo. Unbeknownst to the chain of command — and me — Smith was storing his unexpended ammo in a CONEX in the motor pool.

One day, Smith decided to teach primary marksmanship instruction and weapon familiarization on an AT4 shoulder-launched munition in the motor pool near my office tent. For the training, he told the unit armorer to bring an AT4 used in a previous live-fire exercise.

My Soldiers and I weren't participating in the training; we were contending with malfunctioning generators. We were going back and forth between the office tent and the generators, trying to figure out why they kept tripping off. During our troubleshooting, we heard a loud boom. At first, I thought one of the generators had overloaded, but when I saw smoke rising on the other side of a nearby tent, I hit the dirt.

Suddenly, I saw Soldiers running from the training area screaming and yelling for help. One Soldier had blood all over his face. The unimaginable had happened; Smith had fired a live AT4 inside the motor pool! The round from the AT4 hit a jersey barricade, bounced off and then struck a water buffalo before finally falling to the ground. Debris flew everywhere and there were a few minor injuries. Fortunately, due to the proximity of the discharge, the round wasn't activated and didn't cause as much damage as it could have.

Only a tent separated my Soldiers and me from the round. After the chaos cleared, I realized had Smith fired the AT4 at a different angle, it could've activated, hit tents or, even worse, killed someone. To this day, I still think, "What if?" ◀

▶▶ DID YOU KNOW?

The Range and Weapons Safety Toolbox is a centralized collection of online resources for managing range operations and safe weapons handling. The toolbox hosts various references and materials, including publications, training support packages, multimedia products, ammunition and explosives information, and safety messages and alerts. The toolbox also provides links to useful sites and tools like the Defense Ammunition Center's Explosives Safety Toolbox and the Ground Risk Assessment Tool. Check it out at <https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety/>. Shoot straight, stay safe.



As deer season draws near, there's undoubtedly a heightened sense of excitement among the most avid — and even novice — hunters. The anticipation of a successful opening-day hunt or a trophy buck appeals to most hunters just as Christmas morning does to a child.

Take a Stand

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 TIMOTHY EDGETTE
Accident Investigation Division
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Most of us have already cleaned and inspected our weapons and ammunition, laid out our hunting clothing and knocked off the dust from last year's favorite pair of boots. All set to go, right? Not quite; there's one question left I want to ask all my fellow hunters: Have you focused as much attention on safety and the preparation of your tree stand as you have the other aspects of your preseason planning?

Hunters failing to wear a full-body harness or neglecting to have it properly connected to the tree ranks as the No. 1 cause of tree-stand-related accidents and fatalities nationwide. According to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, five of the 18 tree-

stand-related accidents during the 2010-2011 deer-hunting season resulted in fatalities. Fortunately, the statistics for the 2011-2012 hunting season were better, with only nine tree-stand-related accidents and none being fatal.

Besides wearing a full-body harness and ensuring you are properly attached to the tree, what other precautions can you take to ensure your stand is ready for the upcoming hunting season? Regardless of the age, type or style of your tree stand (a climber, lock-on or ladder), there's always a need to do a preseason safety inspection of your equipment. Before the season starts, take out your tree stand and inspect it for rust or cracks and signs of corrosion or rot. Then lay out the tree stand from its stowed and carry position and begin a more

thorough inspection of the foot straps, climbing pegs/rails, any chains or cables, the locking hardware (pins, nuts and bolts), and any rope, hoist lines or seat. Check to make sure there are no rips, tears, frays or dry rot on any of the straps. The chains and cables should be smooth to the touch, without any nicks or burs that could cut or tear a lowering line or strap and reduce the overall tensile strength of the cable. All welds should be structurally sound and void of cracks and chips.

As you are inspecting these items, make sure you have the necessary tools to tighten any hardware that may have worked loose. Also have a lubricant or rust inhibitor on hand to free and protect the hardware. The Treestand Manufacturer's Association recommends only replacing unserviceable hardware with hardware from the manufacturer per the owner's manual. Failure to do so could void the warranty or lead to a failure of the stand. Once you have determined your tree stand is serviceable and safe, conduct a pull test of all components while it's still on the ground. Using your hands and feet, pull and tug on the straps, ropes, chains and cables to verify their effectiveness under a simulated load.

When you've finished your inspection, it's



time to put your tree stand into operation. Before you begin this step, I recommend you enlist the help of another individual to act as a safety spotter. Wearing all of your safety equipment, start a slow climb. While still in

the starting position, in very close proximity to the ground, place all of your weight on the tree stand and verify its stability and structural integrity. If completely satisfied, continue your climb and go through the entire process of placing the tree stand into an operational position just as you would on opening day. This will help you identify any unforeseen shortcomings such as a lowering line that's too short or a missing locking pin. If at any point during the climb you do identify a risk or a hazard, return to the ground and correct the deficiency. If everything's good to go, complete the climb as if you were preparing for a real hunt.

Once satisfied with the safety condition of the tree stand, reverse the processes and return to the ground. Remove the stand from the tree and stow it back into a carrying configuration. Remember, you should never leave your tree stand outside for an extended period. Sun, rain, snow and ice could deteriorate the integrity of the stand and make it unsafe.

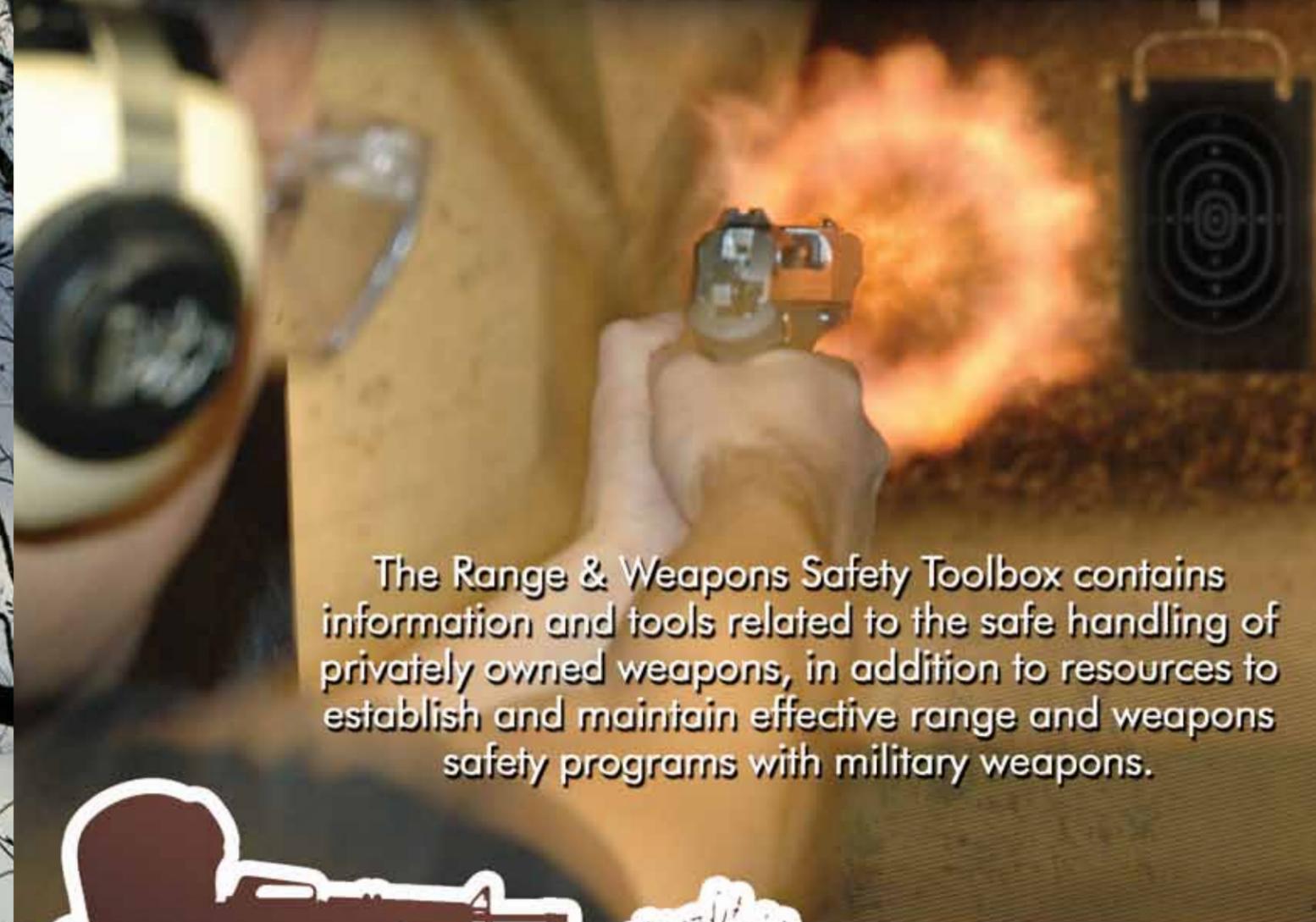
The entire preseason safety inspection of your stand will vary depending on your particular type and model. If you take the time to verify the reliability and overall safe condition of your tree stand, you will not only gain further confidence in your equipment, you'll be well on your way to an accident-free season.

Always adhere to local and state hunting regulations and laws, and refer to the Treestand Manufacturer's Association's recommendations regarding the use of a full-body harness. Never use a tree stand that doesn't pass a preseason safety inspection. As the season continues, you should always conduct a safety assessment and inspection of your stand before and after every use. Remember, a complete inspection of the stand, hardware, straps and any welds could make the difference between a successful deer-hunting season verses a trip to the hospital or, even worse, the morgue.◀◀



“ HUNTERS failing to wear a full-body **HARNES**S or neglecting to have it properly **CONNECTED** to the tree ranks as the **NO. 1** cause of tree-stand-related **ACCIDENTS** and fatalities **NATIONWIDE.**”

ARE YOU A SHARPSHOOTER?



The Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox contains information and tools related to the safe handling of privately owned weapons, in addition to resources to establish and maintain effective range and weapons safety programs with military weapons.



CHECK IT OUT TODAY!

<https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety>



ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



ARE YOU an Experienced Rider?

MASTER SGT. JOHN COLLINS
G3 Operations
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

If your confidence and decision-making skills behind the handlebars are generated from experiences while riding, when do you actually become an “experienced” motorcycle rider? To determine that answer, ask yourself certain questions. For example, how much have you ridden and on what types of motorcycles? Or, are you simply an experienced owner; someone who has had a bike for a long time but only spends a limited time riding?

The answers to these questions are particularly important when commanders are wondering what they should be looking for when choosing experienced riders to serve as mentors for their motorcycle mentorship program. Leaders are confronted with these issues every time there is talk about MMPs within the Army. Unfortunately, there is no clear definition in a regulation, field manual or motorcycle handbook. In practice, identifying an experienced rider is like defining what makes some Soldiers natural leaders; nobody can tell you what it is, but everybody recognizes it when they see it.

So how do you know when you’re looking at an experienced rider? To do that, you must first address a few misconceptions. One is that if a rider has owned a motorcycle for a long time but only ridden it a couple of months each year, they are experienced riders. Similarly, just because a Soldier rides a few miles to work and home every day on the same route doesn’t make him or her an experienced rider. These are examples of experienced owners, not experienced riders.

Another misconception is if you are senior in rank and ride a motorcycle, then you are an experienced rider in the unit. Again, this is not always true because many people decide to start riding in their 30s and haven’t been riding for

all that long. Rank does not make experience. Riding time does.

For units to recognize this can be a challenge. We naturally tend to assign the senior-ranking individual to be the senior mentor for the unit. However, just because you are a leader in the Army does not qualify you as the most experienced person to mentor younger riders. Unfortunately, sometimes our pride gets in the way, making it hard to listen to guidance from a younger, junior Soldier who is more experienced on two wheels.

Over the years I have served, I’ve realized that we, as leaders, don’t always have the answer to every problem. Since there is no cookie cutter pattern for identifying experienced riders, here are a few things to consider when selecting mentors for your unit. First, look at how you conduct day-to-day business in your unit. You use individuals with loads of experience to train and prepare Soldiers for their missions; why not do the same with your MMP?

Second, understand the need to select mentors based on their experience with certain types of motorcycles. A perfect example is to look at aviators — you don’t have UH-60 Black Hawk pilots training AH-64 Apache pilots. Why isn’t the same process used when selecting mentors for motorcycle riders? Units can follow the same concept by selecting a mentor for each of the

two primary types of bikes — sport bikes and cruisers. These two types of motorcycles handle differently and require different skill sets. Many riders don’t have experience on both types of bikes, so a single mentor for both types of riders may not be the best choice. The more specific experience and knowledge mentors have to lead the program, the stronger they can make it.

Third, an experienced rider must also be one who knows the Army standards for safe operation; practices safe and disciplined riding at all times; and can be the example of responsible riding while they mentor other riders in a unit. These are only a few recommendations for units to consider when selecting mentors and don’t reflect all the criteria needed.

The truth is experienced riders are not always those who are senior in rank. Each unit should review a rider’s history, interview the individual and select the best choice to lead their program. It may be that the specialist who began riding as a kid and progressed to larger bikes as an adult is the senior experienced rider in your unit, not necessarily a sergeant first class or the first sergeant. Experience goes a long way in training others to survive, especially on two wheels. To identify an experienced rider for your mentorship program, look at the individual, not rank.◀◀



WHEN THE PLAN CHANGES

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 BRAD SHEALY
Army Aviation Supply Facility
South Carolina Army National Guard
Eastover, S.C.

The night shift started as it typically did for an air medical pilot. Log in by 7 p.m., talk with the outgoing pilot about the day's activities and check pertinent information like weather, notices to airmen and temporary flight restrictions. The forecast promised an improvement in marginal visual flight rules conditions, so I looked forward to a good movie on the tube by 9 p.m. It was looking like a decent night. The crew brief with the nurse and paramedic concluded with a tongue-in-cheek wish for a quiet night — or at least a normal one. Little did I realize that in a few hours we would be caught in a situation reflecting one of the leading causes of fatal accidents in the air medical business.

The 11 p.m. call interrupted what was a slow night. A stabbing in a local town had prompted the request for air transport. A check of the weather revealed a scattered cloud layer at 2,500 feet with visibility at six miles. The radar showed a few small, isolated showers, but nothing that prompted the crew or me to decline the mission. After a quick walk to the Bell 206L4, we were on our way to the scene. An in-flight observation

of the weather confirmed the report received prior to takeoff. This mission should be a quick, easy turn — get to the scene, load the patient and get back to the hospital. Maybe we'll even get a few hours of sleep before shift change in the morning.

The first mission change came soon after landing at the scene. Dispatch notified us that we had to transport the patient to a hospital farther away from our base hospital due to an unusually

busy night in the emergency room. A quick re-check of the weather revealed even better conditions for our destination. Our fuel status was good and our patient was stable, so we accepted the change. So much for a few hours of sleep on this shift. Oh well, mission change is a fact of life in the air medical business.

We loaded the patient and departed. I climbed to 2,000 feet and settled in for the

flight. Suddenly and without the warning of gradually disappearing ground lights, I found myself fully engulfed in clouds. A feeling of dread and denial swept over me, and for the moment, I did nothing. The first words out of my mouth were, "We are IMC!" The medical crew's initial reaction was total silence. I suspect they, too, were experiencing a bit of denial. Every instinct in me wanted

to reduce the collective in an attempt to descend out of the clouds, but my training told me not to. "Fly the aircraft first," I reminded myself.

I tried to return to visual meteorological conditions via a 180-degree turn, but no luck. I struggled to make the mental transition to instrument flight rules flight, still trying to figure out how to get out of the clouds as soon as possible. I reluctantly initiated

the inadvertent IMC procedure and confessed my dilemma to the local approach control agency. The situation deteriorated as heavy rain pelted the aircraft and lightning flashed. I had flown into a developing thunderstorm. I asked the controller for a vector out of the weather. The controller issued me the requested vector with the reassurance that I should be clear of the cell in a few miles.

Things were now happening fast and I constantly had to remind myself to “aviate first, then navigate and, finally, communicate.” I had not expected how difficult it would be to maintain altitude, airspeed and heading while simultaneously setting up the avionics for a night approach in instrument conditions. Even with a user-friendly Garmin 430 GPS, this was a challenging task for a single pilot. Fortunately, the controller’s information proved correct and I exited the storm while being vectored for the instrument landing system, a few miles from my base hospital. I advised the controller of my return to

visual conditions and landed safely, shaken but alive. As I reflect on that night, a few hard-earned lessons come to mind. First, I realized I had never really settled the issue of when I was going to commit to IMC in deteriorating weather conditions. Although the decision was essentially made for me, the next time it might not be so clear-cut. How much am I willing to “slow down and go down” to maintain VMC? It’s a personal decision for each aviator to make; however, when the situation rises, will it be a time of debate or a time of action? Decide beforehand and the mental transition to an emergency instrument

condition will be much easier. Second, I had underestimated how the stress of an emergency amplifies the difficulty of accomplishing simple tasks like inputting the approach into the GPS in a dimly lit cockpit. Training and frequent practice will reduce this stress when the time comes to do it for real and your brain temporarily turns to mush. Finally, I was lulled into a sense of complacency by the improving weather situation. I let down my guard and got caught. I was forced to be reactive that night instead of proactive. I walked away from my experience determined to be better prepared the next time the plan changes.◀

“**SUDDENLY** and without the **WARNING** of gradually disappearing ground **LIGHTS**, I found myself fully **ENGULFED** in clouds. A feeling of **DREAD** and **DENIAL** swept over **ME**, and for the **MOMENT**, I did **NOTHING.**”



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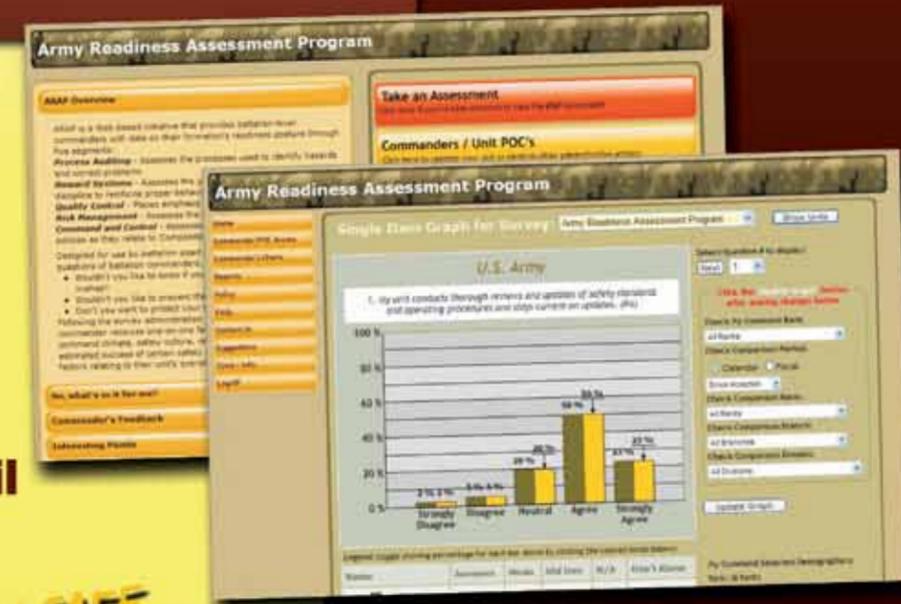
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Crosswalks or Crosshairs?

RICHARD RUDOLPH
Garrison Safety Office
Fort Knox, Ky.

How many times were you about to step into a crosswalk but noticed the driver in an approaching vehicle seemed oblivious to you? How often did you hesitate and wait, choosing to not let their being oblivious send you into oblivion?

I'd just driven on post and stopped at the 24-hour shoppette to get my morning cup of coffee. It was 6 a.m. on a chilly December day in Kentucky, and I needed that cup of joe. I drove to the parking lot where I worked, got out and headed toward Seventh Avenue to my office. Early as it was, it was still a bit

dark outside and I made it a point to look left and right before stepping out. I saw cars stopped at a red light about 300 feet to my left. When I looked to the right, I saw the road was clear. Glancing again to the left for a couple of seconds, I felt it was safe to step into the crosswalk. I wasn't distracted or in a rush

as I started across the street. I was halfway across when a blue Ford Mustang that had been stopped at the red light flew through the crosswalk, nearly clipping me from behind. That really startled me. I yelled, "Watch where you're going!" But he just drove off as if nothing had happened. When I got to the other

side and stepped onto the sidewalk, I just stood there for a moment. I thought how lucky I'd been that I hadn't stopped in the crosswalk to answer my phone, turned around to get something I'd left in my car or dropped my keys and bent down to pick them up. Had I done any of those things, I might have been seriously injured. Even worse, I might not have been around to spend Christmas with my family.

I feel lucky that I wasn't hit that day. Maybe the driver had been thinking about a last-minute gift or was running late for work. Maybe he'd been changing a CD, sipping some coffee, munching on some food or talking on a cellphone. Maybe he just felt like he owned the road. Whatever the reason he sped through a well-lit crosswalk, his actions were irresponsible and wrong.

Because pedestrians have the right of way in crosswalks, sometimes we may tend to feel safe, believing drivers will respect the law. However, when they don't, we're the losers. It's a simple matter of size, weight and momentum — car bodies pack a bigger punch than human bodies.

I thought I was safe stepping into that crosswalk that morning. I know better now and realize it's not enough to just look left and right and left again. When you're in a crosswalk, you need to constantly monitor what is happening around you. For your own safety, never enter a crosswalk while talking or texting on your cellphone or

while distracted about the day's activities. Also, before stepping into the street, make sure approaching drivers can see you. Finally, make sure you reinforce crosswalk safety

with your children so they'll be safe when crossing a road. Remember, there may not be a crossing guard at every street they have to cross.◀

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

The National Safety Council reports that about 5,900 pedestrians are killed by automobiles every year, while another 85,000 are injured. Almost one-fourth of these victims are children under the age of 15. By following the safety tips below, you can protect yourself and your children:

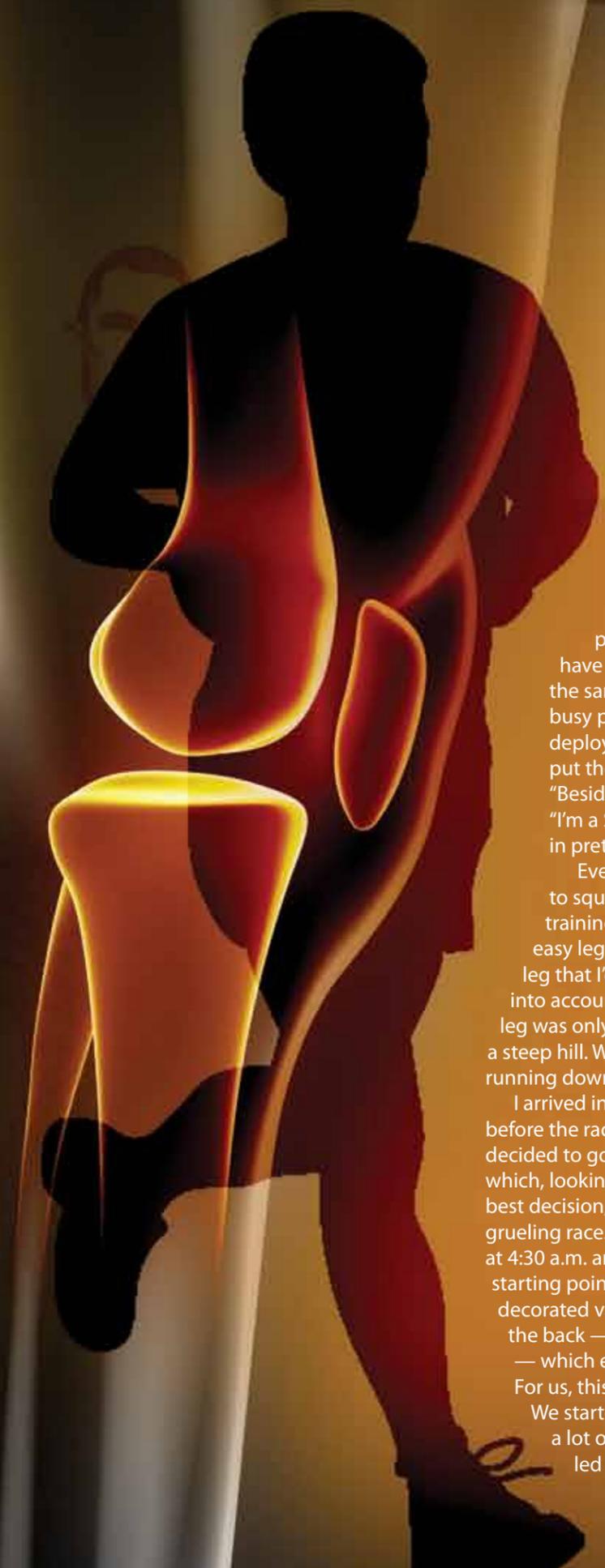
- It is critical to teach children to look left-right-left before crossing streets.
- Cross only at designated crossings. Entering traffic mid-block or from between parked cars is dangerous.
- Teach children to never dart out into traffic.

Because **PEDESTRIANS** have the **RIGHT** of **WAY** in crosswalks, **SOMETIMES** we may tend to **FEEL** safe, believing **DRIVERS** will **RESPECT** the **LAW.**

Last April, my sister talked me into running an insane 24-hour relay race called the Ragnar. Twelve of us decided to take on this challenge — a 192-mile trek through the scenic Wasatch Mountains, just east of Salt Lake City. With so many in our group, I only had to run three legs of the race. But don't be fooled into thinking the race was a piece of cake. Over the course of two days and one night, participants are awake, cheering each other on, wearing wacky costumes, listening to live bands and partying along the route. Good times ...

Don't Believe the Hype

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 LACEY SMITH
A Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment,
159th Combat Aviation Brigade
Fort Campbell, Ky.



According to an article published in the May 2009 issue of *Runner's World* titled "Cruise Control," written by Jason Karp, Ph.D., running downhill requires muscles to lengthen, which can cause microscopic tears in the muscle fibers and generate more force than when running uphill or on flat ground. It's easy for runners to hit top speed on a steep descent — and the faster you move, the harder each foot strikes the ground and muscles endure more pounding. However, these factors don't mean runners should avoid all downward

slopes. Research has shown that running downhill can give your pace a lift. A 2006 study published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* showed that when sprinters trained on uphill and downhill, they improved speed and foot turnover more than running uphill or flat surfaces alone. By incorporating downhill into your training, you can weather them better and bounce back from them sooner. To read the rest of this article in its entirety, for running tips and more information, visit www.runnersworld.com.

I found out I was participating in the Ragnar about six weeks prior to race day, so I didn't have much time to train. During the same timeframe, my unit was busy preparing for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan, so I put the race on the back burner. "Besides," I rationalized to myself, "I'm a Soldier and I've always been in pretty decent running shape." Every couple of days, I was able to squeeze in about three miles for training. I figured since I had two easy legs and one medium-to-hard leg that I'd be fine. What I didn't take into account was that although my last leg was only five miles, it was all down a steep hill. Who would've imagined running downhill could be so difficult?

I arrived in Park City, Utah, the night before the race. My teammates and I decided to go out for beer and pizza, which, looking back probably wasn't the best decision, especially on the eve of a grueling race. The next day, we woke up at 4:30 a.m. and drove 85 miles to the starting point of the race. Our pirate-like decorated van had our team name on the back — Where's the Finish (WTF) — which everyone seemed to love. For us, this is where the fun began. We started out with little sleep and a lot of coffee ... which eventually led to lots of energy drinks.

The race began beautifully. Everyone's energy and excitement level was high and we were ready for anything. However, by hour 20, we were all dragging butt with bloodshot eyes. We had so much caffeine in our systems that we couldn't sleep if we wanted to. We were all fatigued, and someone in our group had a pulled muscle, while someone else got sick. Undaunted, we carried on.

My last portion of the run was coming up and I figured it would be my "easy" leg because it was downhill. Little did I know that this part of the race would injure me so badly that I wouldn't be able to run for the next six months! I hadn't trained for downhill running, but, to my surprise, I ran my best time. I was proud and felt great afterward; however, the next day was a different story. My knees were killing me, running was impossible and climbing stairs was very painful.

Regrettably, I didn't prepare for this race like I should. Ragnar officials recommend participants train as they would for a half marathon and start training at least eight to 12 weeks ahead of the race, increasing their mileage by 10 percent each week. I was advised to put away my running shoes for a while and take time to heal.

Looking back, I have a love-hate relationship with this race. I'm glad I did it, but wish I had prepared myself better and been spared the six painful months of recovery.◀

Do it Right ... the First Time

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 CALEB KITRELL
C Company, 2nd Battalion (Assault),
2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division
K-16 Air Base, Korea

How do we teach our young Soldiers to “Do it right ... the first time?” Doing things right the first time is a philosophy, a mentality and a performance standard. Too many people today want to cut corners, get out of work and overlook the little things. In the world of Army aviation, this philosophy costs time, money, resources and, most importantly, lives. Taking your time and doing the job right the first time will not only improve and build a much needed trust between the maintainers and users, but also increase morale, productivity and trust across any organization.

As leaders, we need to stress to our Soldiers the importance of pride that comes along with hard work. I believe the younger generation needs to understand the value of standing behind the work that they perform every day to keep our aviation community safe. A few companies have come out with “DRIFT,” an acronym for Do it Right the First Time. This philosophy also encompasses and applies to Army aviation. The following are my three strategies:

1. Recognize the high cost of cutting corners and making mistakes.
2. Leaders continuously monitor and get out to places where Soldiers are more apt to not take their time and make mistakes.
3. Work proactively to address the flaws and help the chain of command provide solutions.

The first step in correcting some systemic issues in your organization is to help your Soldiers recognize the high cost of cutting corners and making mistakes. The Army has standards for everything and they need to

be sought out, instructed and followed. Following the standard ensures quality and uniformity, which will aid in having a safer workplace and in finding system defects. Zero defects are probably an unattainable goal, but when every aspect of the job is subject to scrutiny, better and safer operating practices come about. Also, if Soldiers make mistakes, encourage them to be upfront and honest without fearing repercussion. Sharing lessons learned can help prevent future accidents, saving lives and protecting equipment.

Leaders, lead from the front and get involved. When Soldiers see leaders participating, they recognize the importance of their job and tend to perform at a higher level. Showing your Soldiers the right way and enforcing the standard will steer your unit toward success. As important as Advanced Individual Training is, Soldiers

need to add the experience that comes with the day-to-day performance of their tasks to build their skill levels. The most important thing is to encourage them in doing it right and doing their best. That’s all you can ask. They will listen.

Lastly, if something is broke, fix it. It’s easy to say but sometimes hard to execute. Do you have people in your unit always complaining about problems and never providing solutions? If you see a problem in the way operations are being performed, bring it to the forefront — either with the individual responsible or to the leadership that can effect change. Don’t leave an issue for someone else to find; it will only build and may end up hurting your credibility. Address bigger flaws at the command level to bring about change. Never go to the command without a solution to fix the problem.◀

“When **SOLDIERS** see leaders participating, they **RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR JOB** and tend to perform at a **HIGHER LEVEL.**”

Untrained and Unlucky

I was 18, airborne and invincible. I'd just received my enlistment bonus and decided it was time to get some transportation. I got one of my fellow troopers at Fort Bragg, N.C., to take me to the nearest Suzuki dealer. I wanted to buy a 650 GSL, but my credit wasn't good enough to qualify for a loan, so my only option was to pay cash for a 450 GSL. Being the highly intelligent and experienced (translate that young and dumb) person I was, I quickly purchased the motorcycle. After a quick lesson on how to ride by the salesperson, I was on my way.

Within four hours, I stopped at the company orderly room to visit a friend who was pulling duty as the charge of quarters runner. Afterward, as I was pulling out of the parking lot, I managed to dump the bike and break a lens cover. All things considered, not a very impressive performance for my first day of riding. It dawned on me maybe there really was a good reason for taking motorcycle safety training.

Looking back, I realize how lucky I was I didn't kill myself. I was safer jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft in flight than I was riding that motorcycle. I'd been trained to jump out of airplanes, but I hadn't been trained to ride a motorcycle. There was a course available at the time, but my own arrogance kept me from taking it. As far as motorcycle riding goes, I was lucky more than skilled in the beginning.

Unfortunately, a young trooper who joined my fire team a couple of years later wasn't as lucky. One day after the last formation, Pvt. Green (a fictitious name) asked me to help him with a decision. You see, he'd also received a bonus for going airborne. I liked him a lot,



JESUS SOTO
210th Regional Support Group
U.S. Army Reserve Center
Aguadilla, Puerto Rico

I sensed his goodness and was always available for any questions he had.

When he approached me, he was unable to decide whether to put the money in the bank or buy a motorcycle. A friend of his in the headquarters platoon had recently bought a bike and was encouraging him to get one so they could ride together. I told him about my riding experiences and suggested he put his money in the bank, emphasizing that would be the wisest choice.

He promptly thanked me and said he agreed.

A couple of days later, he appeared with a new Honda. I was surprised and asked him what happened. Inside I already knew the answer; he'd buckled under the pressure from his friend to buy the bike. I told him to take the rider safety course and be careful on the road. He told me he would and that he'd bought the most expensive helmet at the store, just in case.

About a month later, I received a call at home from the CQ. He told me Green died in a motorcycle accident while riding with his friend on Yadkin Road as the two were going to Cross Creek Mall. Green was on the inside and his friend on the outside position in the right lane when a car in the left lane hit Green's friend, who, in turn, struck him.

Green lost control and dumped the bike, striking the curb with his helmet. The impact was so strong it cracked the helmet and caused severe head trauma. Sadly, he never even made it to the emergency room.

Green never took the motorcycle safety course.

Had he, he might still be here today. His was the first memorial I attended where I personally knew the person the rifle, boots and helmet represented. It was a poignant moment for me when, during the roll call, he was not there to answer his name.

Since I began riding more than 30 years ago, riders have become much more aware of the importance of riding safety. Today, we have a mandate that all Soldiers who ride must first receive Motorcycle Safety Foundation-based training. Despite that, we still suffer losses from motorcycle accidents. I still ride today and always have my card showing I have completed my MSF training. Maybe if Green had taken that training, it would have saved him.

There is a saying that goes something like this, "We know the moment when we were born, but we don't know the moment when we will die."

What I learned from my own mistakes is that knowing how to ride safely and building experience is the best way to make sure that second date comes later — preferably, much later. ◀◀

I took my family to a carnival on Fort Benning, Ga., when my son was 4 years old. He was so excited when we arrived, especially when he saw all the rides, games and cotton candy booth. We were excited, too, but at the time, we didn't have much cash and knew we'd have to be picky about what we rode, played and ate.

Carnival Lesson

COMMAND SGT. MAJ. RONALD OROSZ
1st Army Division West
Fort Hood, Texas

Before jumping in line for the rides, we played a few games. After walking away empty-handed, my son decided it was time to head for the rides. We started easy with the bumper cars but quickly moved on to a fast rock-and-roll tracked machine with super-loud music and then to the giant Ferris wheel.

I didn't have much left for ride tickets after shelling out a lot of cash

for overpriced carnival food. I decided I could save some money by asking a young boy in line, who appeared about 7 or 8 years old, to ride in the same car with my son and keep an eye on him. He agreed and before they boarded the ride, I told my son multiple times to stay in his seat. To board each car, a little gate opened and the kids got in their seats. The ride's operator

controlled the boarding by allowing the wheel to circle slowly as each set of riders entered. After six or so rotations, I watched my son's car near the top of the ride as people continued to board.

My wife and I were chatting and navigating the hot dog condiment counter when I looked up to check on my son. I was horrified when I saw him standing in the cart, which was

“It is a parent's responsibility to **WATCH AND SUPERVISE** their **CHILDREN.**”

now 60 feet off the ground, leaning over the gate. The young boy riding with my son paid no attention to him. Immediately, I yelled at the top of my lungs, “Sit down!”

In a flash, I visualized my son tumbling out of the car and wondered where I could stand to catch him. Could I even get there in time?

Time seemed to stand still and, at the same time, moved light years in a matter of seconds. I continued to yell for my son to sit down.

I didn't care who heard me; I was terrified! I hoped yelling at the ride operator to stop the Ferris wheel until my son sat down was the answer. Finally, he did sit, but my heart was still racing. I demanded the operator bring him down immediately. While my son was

now in his seat, I motioned to him to stay put until his car was brought back to the bottom.

I felt nervous, scared and helpless. Mostly, though, I felt angry — not at my son, but at my faulty decision-making. I put my son's safety in jeopardy to save a few bucks. Our day at the carnival ended abruptly.

I learned a tough, hard lesson that day: Never take shortcuts when it comes to the safety of your family. It is a parent's responsibility to watch and supervise their children. Ride the ride with your child and make sure they stay safe. It's not worth the small amount of cash you'd save by letting them ride without an adult. From that day, I rode every ride with my son or daughter to ensure they were properly secured in the safety restraints. And, of course, I added a personal touch of safety by holding them tightly so they didn't get hurt on my watch. Enjoy the ride, but stay safe! ◀

No one truly knows what it's like to fly in a combat zone during instrument meteorological conditions until they're in the middle of it. As young aviators, we're lectured repeatedly about the horrors of entering inadvertent IMC and trained to manage it as an "emergency" flight only.

Training Saves Lives

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 JEFFERY S. BRUNMEIER
U.S. Army Air Ambulance Detachment, 5th Aviation Battalion
Joint Readiness Training Center
Fort Polk, La.

Why should IIMC happen when we train our crews to avoid it at all costs? If the weather gets bad, crews are trained to turn around and go back or land immediately and wait it out. If trained, equipped, prepared and proficient for IMC and instrument flight rules flight, crews can request an IFR clearance from air traffic control and continue the mission IMC/IFR. The only caveat to that is in the combat

theater, the ATC systems are not in place to conduct a real IFR flight with an IFR clearance, so we can't just land and wait it out.

The solution is simple: GPS. We use a GPS day in and day out for conducting missions. Although not certified for IFR flight, we use it as a backup to our certified navigational equipment. I believe the GPS should be required in the combat theater because

it is a great tool for training and situational awareness. What we had for our area of operation was "emergency GPS" approaches. This was the only way we could recover, in case we did go IIMC, to a safe location.

As an air mission commander in an air ambulance company deployed to Afghanistan

or Iraq, I've often received missions in remote AOs for medevac support. The first seven years of my aviation career were in the assault world and it was beat into our heads that mission training was crucial. We took every chance to conduct training flights in our air ambulance company and performed hoist training, pinnacle approaches and landings, dust landings and, of course, emergency GPS approaches.

Our leadership supported this training and the values it instilled in our junior aviators in preparing them for worst-case scenarios in the combat environment.

Conducting this training with many junior aviators allowed me to show how valuable it is to set up the GPS for an approach and, in turn, be sure of the system. At first, they didn't understand why we trained on these approaches so frequently. However, during the medevac mission I am about to describe, they saw the benefit of this training.

It was a dark and stormy night with zero illumination when we got a call about 11 p.m. for an urgent 9-line medevac mission to rescue a Soldier who had lost his eyesight. Visibility was below 300 meters due to a dust storm,

“The **MISSION** was a **SUCCESS** because of our **STRONG CREW MIX**. We conducted a **CREW BRIEF THOROUGHLY** before each **FLIGHT**.”

and the airfield was IFR where the patient needed level-3 treatment. After talking to Air Force weather, our two crews discussed the mission with safety in mind, including using the available instrument approaches if needed.

Everyone agreed we needed to attempt this mission, but only if we took the pilot in command of our chase aircraft and fly single ship with dual PC/AMC. Every crewmember understood if we were not comfortable flying the mission once we flew outside the wire that we could return to the patrol base and end the mission. In the crew brief, we also discussed our return options for this mission and the fact that the emergency GPS approach really could be our last option for a successful recovery.

My new crew jumped in the medevac aircraft and, in a short time, we were on our

way to pick up the injured Soldier. As soon as we left the light of the patrol base, the reality hit us that we could not see the ground unless we were below 90 feet above ground level and flying 70 knots indicated airspeed. Focused on the mission, the crew coordination was flawless, with the medic and crew chief backing up the pilots with their scan, calling out altitude and obstacles. We safely landed to the point of injury for patient pickup and the crew agreed we needed to fly to the level-3 treatment facility, despite the IMC conditions.

My co-pilot and I then set up the aircraft for instruments, pulled out our approach plate to conduct an instrument takeoff and get us above the dust storm and recovered to the forward operating base where the treatment facility was located. The flight to the FOB was no different from the

many training flights we had conducted in prior months.

The mission was a success because of our strong crew mix. We conducted a crew brief thoroughly before each flight. This enhanced our situational awareness and the fact we had often conducted training flights and practiced emergency GPS approaches prepared us for a situation just like this.

Here's proof that training is essential to the survival of medevac aircrews and the missions we conduct on a day-to-day basis in a hostile environment. Effective coordination comes from training to eliminate all unknown variables and to the standards for these emergencies stated in the unit standing operating procedures using aircrew training manual standards. Training not only saved the patient; it also saved the entire crew.◀

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While I've always worn my seat belt, it wasn't until last year that I personally understood why it was important.

One morning, some close friends stopped by the house to borrow my husband's truck so they could pick up a big-screen TV. We traded vehicles for the morning and agreed to meet for lunch at their house. It was the first time I'd driven their Nissan Altima coupe. Both of my friends are several inches taller than me and, while I adjusted the seat, I consciously decided not to adjust the seat belt. It rode high on my neck and was irritating, but I figured as long as it was on, that was good enough.

I was about a half-mile from their home when I stopped in a left-turn lane waiting for an oncoming Toyota Highlander to pass. The cross streets were controlled only by stop signs. From my left, I saw a speeding car approaching and immediately realized it wasn't going to stop. The driver barreled into the intersection, never even touching her brakes before T-boning the Highlander. The impact sent the Highlander swerving toward me, hitting me head-on at 45 mph.

What happened next was an odd experience I now refer to as "instant slow-motion." Everything happened amazingly quickly, yet I saw every bit of it in clear detail until the moment of impact. Suddenly, I was sitting in the car with a deployed airbag — airbag dust floating in the air — as the Highlander crunched the Altima's front end. Fortunately, no one was behind me, so my car had room to move backward. When I finally stopped, my car had been pushed back some 40 feet from the point of impact.

The driver of the Highlander helped me out of the car and asked if I was

OK. A quick assessment proved I wasn't seriously injured. I said, "My neck is on fire." He was immediately concerned about a neck injury, but I clarified that it was the front of my neck. I pointed and he saw what I meant — a dark red abrasion caused by the seat belt riding too high. Had I adjusted it to the proper position for my height, I could have prevented that injury. In the end, I was also bruised where my seat belt contacted my right hip, and my right shoulder was bruised from being hit by the GPS, which had become a projectile. My eyes needed to be flushed of the airbag dust and I ached all over for a couple of days. All in all, my injuries were very minor considering what they could've been had I not been wearing my seat belt. Although the crash destroyed two vehicles and left one just short of totaled, everyone was wearing their seat belts and walked away with only minor injuries.

While not being injured was the biggest blessing of the whole incident, there was another reason for me to be thankful. My husband was in the middle of an Iraq deployment, and I was home taking care of our kids, who were in school. Without a seat belt, I could've been badly injured and would've needed someone to take care of the kids until family arrived or my husband was able to get home. Though I know his unit would have been able to fill the void, my accident would have affected unit readiness by taking my husband out of theater. That's not something I would have wanted on my conscience,

My 'Ultimate' Seat Belt Experience

AMY VAN RIPER
Redstone Arsenal
Huntsville, Ala.

especially when it could have been so easily prevented by wearing a seat belt.

There's not a single excuse for not wearing your seat belt; but there are many good reasons why wearing one is important. First and foremost, they'll save your life and prevent serious injuries, not to mention wearing seat belts is the law in every state but New Hampshire. In addition, they also prevent heartache and misery for friends and family and protect unit readiness. Even if you are the best driver — one who obeys the traffic signs and rules of the road — you have no control over what other drivers do. When "crunch" time comes, wearing a seat belt is the one thing you can control.◀

Editor's note: Information published in the accident briefs section is based on preliminary loss reports submitted by units and is subject to change. For more information on selected accident briefs, email safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil.

AVIATION

AH-6M



CLASS C

The aircraft touched down hard during a multi-ship landing. Postflight inspection revealed damage to the forward-looking infrared radar and fuselage.

CH-47D



CLASS A

The aircraft was at a hover during final approach when the crew experienced a common missile warning system "deceleration," and flares were expended. The aircraft drifted left and the forward main rotor blade contacted rising terrain. The aircraft came to rest upright.

CH-47F



CLASS C

The aircraft experienced a No. 2 engine overtemp/torque during a slingload landing. Postflight inspection confirmed engine replacement was required.

MH-47G



CLASS C

The crew experienced a rotor system overspeed indication (116 percent) during descent. Postflight inspection confirmed the condition.

HH-60L



CLASS C

The crew was conducting high-altitude mountain environmental training when the MRBs struck a tree during the approach to the landing zone. The damage was minor to three MRBs and significant to one blade, requiring replacement.

UH-60L



CLASS A

The aircraft crashed during a medevac mission, which resulted in four fatalities.

UAS



CLASS B

The ground control station lost link with the unmanned aircraft during the return flight. The UA subsequently descended and crashed into a mountainside. A total loss was reported.

GROUND

ACV



CLASS A

A Soldier was killed when the MaxxPro Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle he was a gunner in overturned.

LOSSES AVIATION
FISCAL 2012 Class A/Fatalities thru June 2012

ATTACK	3/0
RECON	2/4
UTILITY	5/5
CARGO	3/0
TRAINING	0/0
FIXED-WING	1/0
UAS	3/0
TOTAL	17/9

as of Jun. 27, 2012

AMV



CLASS A

A Soldier was killed and two others injured when the HMMWV they were riding in was rear-ended by a commercial 26-ton flatbed truck, causing a chain reaction accident that injured three additional Soldiers in the HMMWV ahead of them.

LOSSES GROUND
FISCAL 2012 Class A/Fatalities thru June 2012

AMV	11/8
ACV	5/3
PERSONNEL INJURY	20/15
<small>includes weapons-handling accidents</small>	
FIRE/EXPLOSIVE	2/2
PROPERTY DAMAGE	1/0
TOTAL	39/28

as of Jun. 27, 2012

Other



CLASS A

Three Soldiers were killed when the Army-leased SUV they were traveling in veered off the road and entered a river. Three local nationals also died in the accident.

Personnel Injury



CLASS A

A Soldier died after he entered a pond and failed to resurface.

CLASS B

A Soldier was hospitalized for a heat injury after collapsing during a marathon. The Soldier remains on kidney dialysis.

DRIVING

POV



CLASS A

A Soldier was killed when he crossed the centerline and collided head-on with an approaching vehicle.

An unbelted Soldier was killed when he lost control on an exit ramp and was partially ejected. The driver and his civilian passenger had been drinking prior to the accident.

POM



CLASS A

A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle, drifted into the oncoming lane and hit a vehicle head-on.

A Soldier was riding his motorcycle in the left lane of an exit ramp when he drifted into the right lane, struck a vehicle and was thrown into the guardrail and killed.

A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle and crashed. Despite having completed Motorcycle Safety Foundation training, the Soldier failed to wear his personal protective equipment and suffered fatal head injuries.

A Soldier was thrown from his bike and suffered paralyzing injuries when an automobile driver violated right of way and entered the Soldier's path of travel.

A Soldier died a month after completing the MSF Basic RiderCourse when he lost control of his newly purchased motorcycle on a winding road and struck a post.

A Soldier was killed when he struck a vehicle that turned left into his path.

LOSSES POV/POM
FISCAL 2012 Class A/Fatalities thru June 2012

CAR	25/24
SUV/JEEP	7/6
TRUCK	2/2
MOTORCYCLE	36/33
PEDESTRIAN	3/3
OTHER*	1/1

*Includes vans, ATVs, snowmobiles and bicycles

as of Jun. 27, 2012 **TOTAL 74/69**
Fiscal Year 2011: **70** Three Year Average: **71**

CLASS C

A Soldier suffered a broken wrist, finger and other injuries when he collided with a pickup driver who ran a stop sign and stopped in the middle of the street.

Pedestrian



CLASS A

A Soldier was found lying in a highway median with a spinal cord injury after he was struck by a hit-and-run driver. The Soldier is expected to be paralyzed from the waist down.



TAKE THE CHALLENGE,
LEARN THE LESSON.

FIREARMS safety techniques

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and get on target today



IMPARTIETI COMPLETE
SEDATION
STOP! LOOK AROUND! MAKE SURE IT'S
SAFE TO FIRE!

DATE	LOS	RECORD	SCORE
281	47	107	5

TOTAL: 452

Firearms Safety Techniques, an interactive site, is available for Soldiers, Family members and Civilians to learn about off-duty safe firearms handling. Visit the site for more useful firearms safety resources.



ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG



Family Strong!



Family

engagement kit

<https://safety.army.mil>

On the home front, a Soldier's "battle buddy" is often his or her Family. Check out the new Family Engagement Kit to learn how you can look out for the safety of your Soldier. The kit features a variety of tools, including videos, real-life stories, resources and tips to keep your Soldier safe.



ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

