ON THE ROAD: ARE YOU A GOOD DRIVER?

KNOWLEDGE

VOL 6 JANUARY 2012

OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY

HOW DID OUR ARMY DO?

- MOTORCYCLE TRAINING
- WEAPONS HANDLING
- SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

+

HELL ON WHEELS

U.S. ARMY
ARMY STRONG.

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SCAN HERE FOR KNOWLEDGE ONLINE

Army Safety

The safety and well-being of every Soldier is vital to keeping our Army the most decisive land force in the world. Since fiscal year 2005, our Army has continually reduced preventable accidents and losses: a feat unprecedented in our 236-year history during a time of war and absolutely critical to maintaining our readiness for the Nation. We commend each of you for your hard work and diligence in making safety a top-priority.

Moving forward into fiscal year 2012, our focus must remain on keeping our Soldiers safe on-duty, but our primary safety focus should be preventing losses off-duty. Our Leaders and Soldiers have done an amazing job in keeping one another safe on the job, especially given the demands placed on our force in garrison and in theater. Off duty, however, we continue to struggle with losses resulting from indiscipline and high risk behavior – particularly on our Nation's roadways and specifically accidents involving speed, failure to wear personal protective equipment or seat belts, and driving under the influence. In fiscal year 2011 alone, motorcycle fatalities increased 21 percent, and accidents in privately owned vehicles continue to claim far too many of our Soldiers lives every year.

Army Leaders, at all levels, must get back to the basics of enforcing standards and reaffirming the principle that Soldiers have a duty and an obligation to stay safe 24/7, on and off duty. We must ensure the example we set is morally and ethically right – when Leaders fail to maintain the standard or lack discipline themselves, they set a climate of tolerance for risky behavior in their subordinates. This is unacceptable in today's Army. Our Soldiers deserve better from the Leaders they trust.

This year, we ask that you look inward – at your personal leadership and within your formations – to find areas you can improve upon for safety. Communicate your expectations clearly to your subordinates and uphold Army standards and discipline personally and consistently.

We are getting better as an Army, and by working together to do what we know is right, we will keep even more Soldiers safe in the year ahead. Thank you for striving every day to keep our Army safe. Together, we are The Strength of the Nation!

Raymond F. Chandler III
Sergeant Major of the Army

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army

KNOWLEDGE

OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY

LEADERS SOLDIERS CIVILIANS FAMILIES

THIS MONTH >>CONTENTS

4 From the DASAF
6 Hell on Wheels
8 Set Up for Success
16 Performance Considerations — As Required
18 One Ride Too Many
30 On Thin Ice
34 Am I a Good Driver?
36 Putting the Cold on Hold
40 Dangerous Slopes
42 The Ice Cream Chaser
44 Accident Briefs

SAFETY >>FEATURES

12 DON'T COUNT ON LUCK
14 SOME LESSONS LAST A LIFETIME
28 BLACK HAWK - 1 PLASTIC TARP - 0

FROM THE >>COVER

HOW DID OUR ARMY DO? 22

MEDIA >>RESOURCES
Posters

ONLINE >>EDITION
https://safety.army.mil

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Command Sgt. Maj. Richard D. Stidley Command Sergeant Major
Michael J. Negard Director, Strategic Communication

Chris Frazier Managing Editor
Bob Van Elsberg Editor
Paula Allman Editor
Lori Yerdon Editor
Blake Grantham Graphic Design
Taryn Gillespie Graphic Design
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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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Knowledge provides a forum for Soldiers, Leaders and safety professionals to share best practices and lessons learned and maintain safety awareness. The views expressed in these articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army, Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. Contents are specifically for accident prevention purposes only. Photos and artwork are representative and do not necessarily show the people or equipment discussed. Reference to commercial products does not imply Army endorsement. Unless otherwise stated, material in this magazine may be reprinted without permission; please credit the magazine and author.

> "Leaders and Soldiers **STAYING ENGAGED** are the primary **REASON** for these **POSITIVE RESULTS**, and I ask for your **CONTINUED** engagement."

WHAT'S YOUR PLAN FOR 2012?

Planning is one of the things we do most as Leaders — we plan for missions, training and any number of other events throughout the year. Recent accident statistics show we're getting better and better at planning for risk as well. And if you haven't started planning for the hazards your Soldiers might face in the months ahead, the new year is a perfect time to begin.

Accident reports from past Januarys indicate several issues Leaders should be focusing on with their Soldiers. Not surprisingly, the most critical area of concern is privately owned vehicle safety. From 2007 to 2011, an average of nearly five Soldiers died in POV crashes during the first month of the new year. Although that number is somewhat lower than we typically experience during spring and summer, the last months of winter are no time for Leaders to lose sight of their high-risk Soldiers. The combination of inclement weather and risky driving behaviors like speeding, drinking and driving and failure to wear seat belts is deadly any time of year, but especially in winter when black ice and other hazards are common on roadways across the United States and overseas.

Statistics also show that motorcycle fatalities happen year-round. During the 2007-2011 timeframe, 17 Soldiers were killed in motorcycle accidents occurring in January or February. That number might seem counterintuitive given the general perception that motorcycle riding is a warm-weather activity. However, all but one of those accidents happened in the Deep South or Southwest — regions that typically experience mild winters and where hundreds of thousands of Soldiers are stationed. Leaders at installations in more congenial climates must continually engage with their Soldiers on both the joys and hazards of motorcycle riding, especially if they themselves are riders. Motorcycle mentorship programs are thriving on many of the large installations in these areas, so I encourage Leaders who aren't involved in an MMP to join one nearby or establish an original charter for their unit.

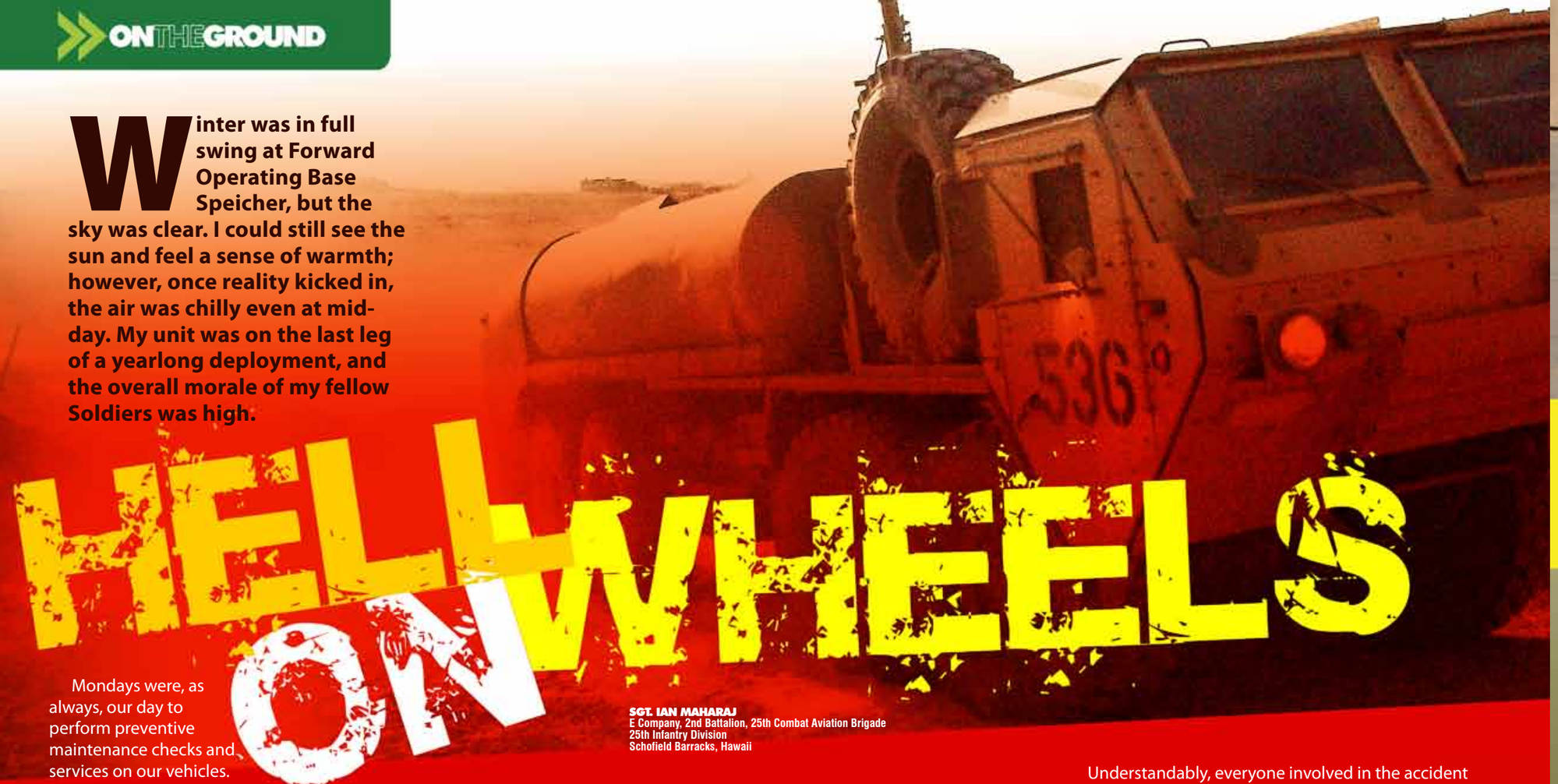
Leaders also can't forget about new "toys" their Soldiers might have received as holiday gifts. Many well-intentioned spouses and parents excitedly purchase big-ticket items like firearms and all-terrain vehicles for their Soldiers, forgetting that a lack of training and experience can result in devastating accidents. Approximately one Soldier died in negligent discharge incidents immediately following the holidays every year during the past five years, and alcohol use was confirmed in at least three of those accidents. Leaders should ensure Soldiers receiving gifts like weapons, ATVs or dirt bikes complete proper training and gain experience in controlled instructional environments through classes offered on post or by a reputable training organization off the installation.

The USACR/Safety Center stands ready to help Leaders in any way possible. We're midway through the annual Safe Fall/Winter Campaign, which contains numerous multimedia tools ideal for safety boards, unit publications and safety briefs. The POV/POM Toolbox, located along with the MMP site on the POV Safety home page at https://safety.army.mil, is an invaluable resource for Leaders looking to engage with and educate their Soldiers on vehicle and motorcycle safety. The Firearms Safety Techniques challenge, an interactive tool that simulates weapons handling in a variety of scenarios, is another great tool available on our website. While none of these products takes the place of hands-on training or engagement, they do provide a fantastic start to effective safety programs.

You'll see in our fiscal 2011 wrap-up article on page 22 of this issue that our Army just finished another positive year for safety, but we cannot afford to rest. Leaders and Soldiers staying engaged are the primary reason for these positive results, and I ask for your continued engagement. Thank you all for what you do every day — your hard work shows in the face of every healthy, safe Soldier in your formations. Keep up the great work, and I look forward to seeing what 2012 brings!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

WILLIAM T. WOLF
Brigadier General, USA
Director of Army Safety



HELL ON WHEELS

Winter was in full swing at Forward Operating Base Speicher, but the sky was clear. I could still see the sun and feel a sense of warmth; however, once reality kicked in, the air was chilly even at mid-day. My unit was on the last leg of a yearlong deployment, and the overall morale of my fellow Soldiers was high.

SGT. IAN MAHARAJ
E Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade
25th Infantry Division
Schofield Barracks, Hawaii

Mondays were, as always, our day to perform preventive maintenance checks and services on our vehicles. This came with the task of having to drive halfway across camp to refuel our vehicles when necessary. I liked this task. I was a private first class, and doing anything that involved driving big vehicles was great.

One of my battle buddies recognized my eagerness to drive and volunteered to be my truck commander when an opportunity for me to get behind the wheel presented itself. After performing PMCS on a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck, I got the vehicle dispatch and headed to the fuel point. Along the way, my buddy and I talked about what we were going to do once we got home. I had a feeling this was going to be a great day.

After topping off my vehicle with fuel, we headed back to the motor pool. There was only one major road to and from the fuel point, but there were many side roads around the camp — all of them feeding back into the main road. About 10 minutes out from the motor pool, I happened to notice a 5-ton troop carrier cruising down one of the side roads about to merge onto the main road I was traveling. I knew there was a stop sign posted at the upcoming intersection for the merging lane, but for some reason I had a feeling the troop carrier wasn't going to stop. Anticipating a collision, I swerved onto the shoulder of my lane.

> "Thankfully, **EVERYONE** involved in the accident was **WEARING SEAT BELTS**."

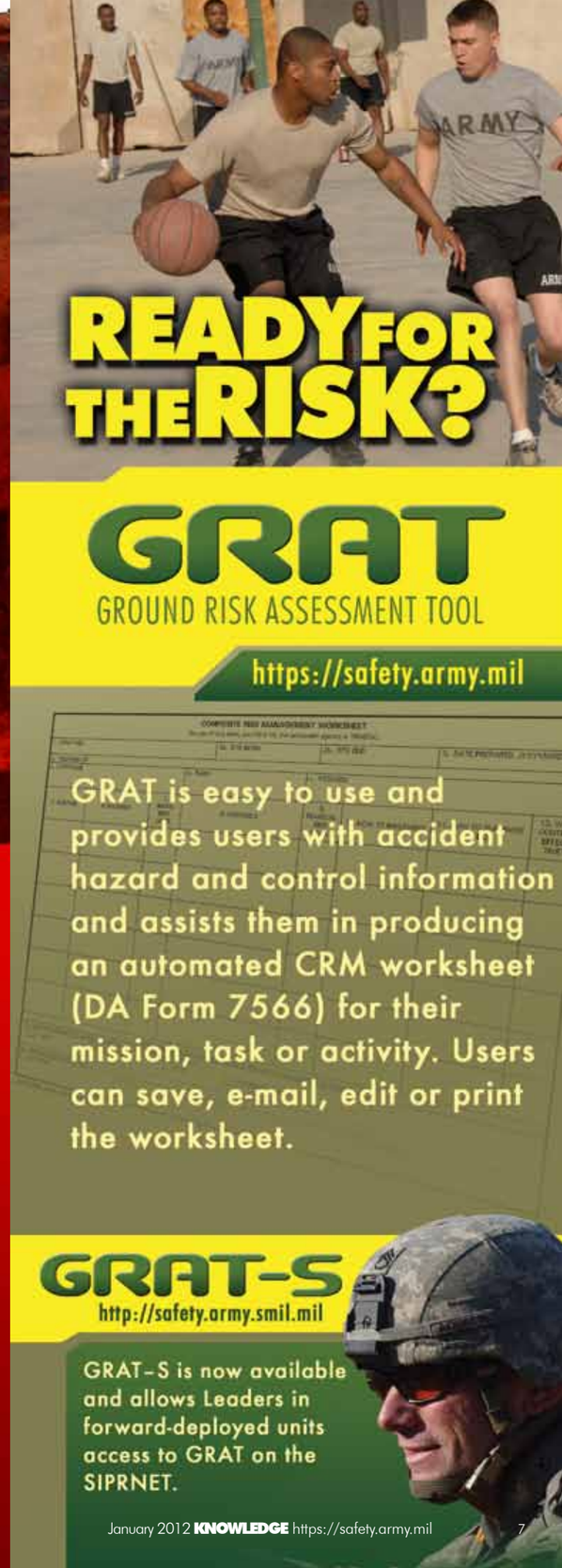
It happened quickly … the other truck didn't stop and we collided hard, with dust flying everywhere. The force of the collision knocked me out for a few seconds. When I came to, my buddy was gone. At this point, I was scared. After I hopped out of the vehicle, relief washed over me when I saw him safely sitting on the ground. My next thought focused on the passengers in the 5-ton. Not surprisingly, it was totaled. After all, it was really no match against a 38,000-pound-plus HEMTT. The scene was a mess; there were fluids, vehicle parts and pieces strewn everywhere.

Understandably, everyone involved in the accident was shaken up a bit. We gathered our gear and started to discuss the accident. I learned the operator of the other truck was from another camp and not familiar with ours. He also ignored the stop sign, resulting in the crash.

Passersby stopped to assist us, and soon the military police were there too. Soldiers from my unit notified our battalion, and the safety officer showed up shortly thereafter. It was good to see familiar faces; something like this had never happened to me before. I was relieved there were no serious injuries. My buddy did receive cuts on his hand and leg, but otherwise he was OK. Thankfully, everyone involved in the accident was wearing seat belts.

As a new driver, I learned a valuable lesson that day: Speed limits and traffic signs are there for a reason, so always obey them. I thank God I was driving the speed limit and was alert enough to anticipate the other driver's actions.

Today, as a sergeant, I always stress to my Soldiers that they need to drive not only for themselves, but for others on the road too. I feel fortunate that I am here to tell this story and able to serve my country in this great organization we call the U.S. Army.



SET UP FOR SUCCESS

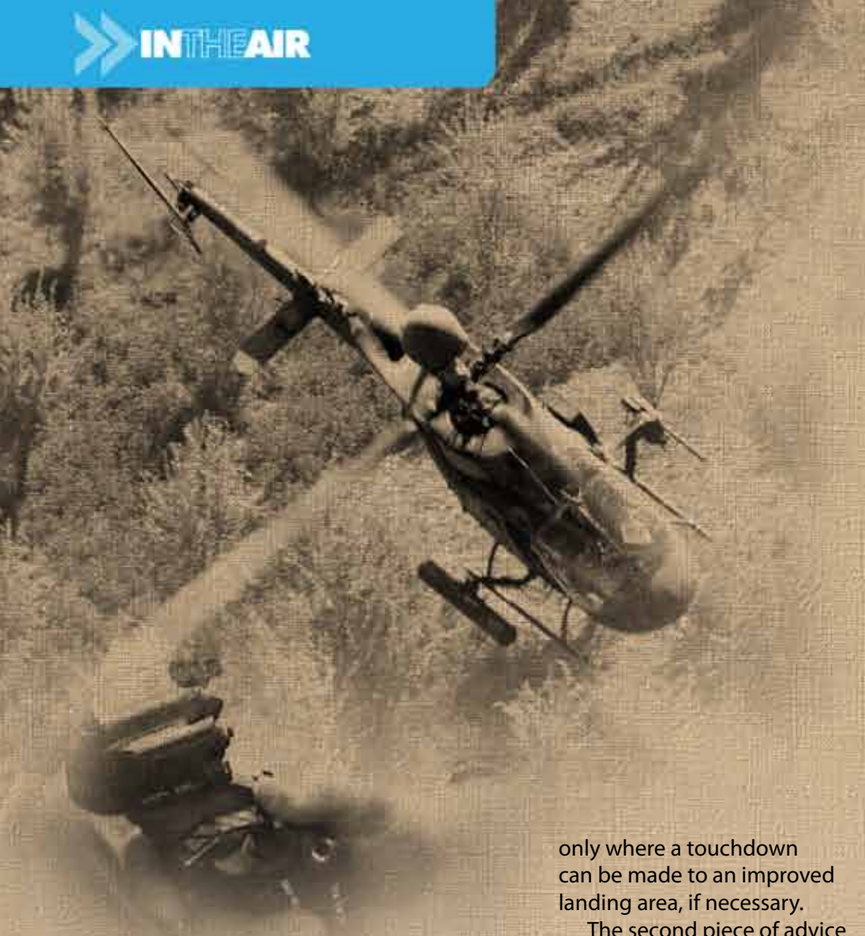
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 A.J. "BUD" KENNEY
Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization
U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Pages 2-40 through 2-42 of the latest edition of the OH-58D Maintenance Test Flight Checklist outline the procedure for conducting an autorotation RPM check. This check has changed very little, if at all, since I went to the Maintenance Test Pilot Course in 1998. It consists of conducting a maneuver which places the aircraft in an autorotative state so the autorotation RPM can be measured. The maintenance test pilot performs a simple mathematical calculation, taking into account both the weight of the aircraft and the density altitude. The MTP then adjusts the main rotor pitch change links to achieve the desired RPM if a correction is required. It's not rocket science.

As stated earlier, this check has not changed since I've been an OH-58D MTP and, as far as I know, it's the same check used since they first started building the OH-58D. However, the method of training for this maneuver has changed for students going through the MTPC. The Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization has some key safety points for every MTP we work with at Fort Rucker or when we are visiting units in the field. There have been three Class A accidents in recent years related to this check. If you are an OH-58D MTP, please take the following advice to heart.

When discussing this maneuver, we like to tell the test pilots to set themselves up for success. What this means is to plan for the worst during the check. Do not assume the engine is going to come back to life at the bottom of the autorotation just like it has hundreds of times before. I will be the first to admit that during my time as a junior MTP, I made that assumption. I can recall making the cross-country flight from Fort Carson, Colo., to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., where we knew we would have to make an autorotation RPM adjustment due to the decrease in altitude. Before arriving at Bicycle Lake Army Airfield, we climbed over the Mojave Desert and rolled off the throttle to take the measurement. Fortunately, the engine always responded and I didn't have to attempt a successful touchdown autorotation to the desert floor.

Other than my own personal lack of experience at that time, the only excuse I can make is I was trained to do the check that way. Up until recently, the OH-58D MTPC had always trained this maneuver on two grass strips



> What this **MEANS** is to **PLAN FOR THE WORST** during the check.

in the south maintenance test flight area on Fort Rucker. This maneuver is now trained in the traffic pattern at Dothan Regional Airport so the student pilot can align the aircraft with an actual runway. Here's your first piece of advice: Conduct this maneuver only where a touchdown can be made to an improved landing area, if necessary.

The second piece of advice goes out to the currently deployed MTPs. This one deals with the weight of the aircraft at the time of the maneuver. Set yourself up for success by reducing the weight of the aircraft as much as possible before you do this check. That means taking the rockets out of the launcher, removing the Hellfire missiles or pulling that ammo can full of .50 caliber rounds. Remember also that 300 pounds of fuel weighs the same as 300 pounds of ammo. If you are conducting a general maintenance test flight, try to save this check for last so you are as light as possible when you do it. To give you some perspective, the "Slick" aircraft used for contact training at Fort Rucker weighs between 4,500 and 4,600 pounds with a full bag of fuel. Touchdown autos are conducted day-in and day-out on these aircraft without incident. The closer you can get to that weight, the better your chances are at surviving an engine failure.

The third and final piece of advice deals with heeding the second warning associated with this check. This requires the MTP to select an entry altitude that allows a power recovery by 500 feet above ground level. The reason for this warning should be obvious in that it gives the MTP time to plan an autorotation to the ground in the event of an actual engine failure. It could also apply to a mistake if the MTP forgot to roll the throttle back on before increasing collective to establish a climb. The "Throttle Warning" message will display at 400 feet AGL if the throttle is below 92 percent throttle position. However, the MTP's first warning indication will most likely be the LOW ROTOR audio when attempting to add power to establish the climb prior to 500 feet AGL. Regardless, adhering to the warning will give you the time you need to either fix the mistake or conduct a successful touchdown auto.

Applying these three simple steps may someday keep you from damaging an aircraft beyond repair or even save your life. This should be the goal of every pilot. As many of you know, Corpus Christi Army Depot, Texas, is in the process of building more OH-58D helicopters. Unfortunately, we continue to destroy them faster than they can repopulate the fleet. One last thing, even if you are not an OH-58D MTP, this advice still applies to all aviators conducting any type of power-off maneuver. Stay safe!

DON'T COUNT ON LUCK

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

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 motorcycle, 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 to young and dumb) person I was, I quickly purchased the motorcycle. After a short 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 — not a very impressive performance for my first day of riding. It finally dawned on me that 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. The truth is I was safer jumping out of a perfectly good aircraft than I was riding on that motorcycle. I'd been trained to jump out of airplanes, but I hadn't been trained to ride a motorcycle. There was a Motorcycle Safety Foundation course available at the time, but my own arrogance kept me from taking it. As far as motorcycle riding goes, I was more lucky 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 (not his real name) asked me to help him with a decision. He'd also received a bonus for going airborne and was trying 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 motorcycle. 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 to be careful on the road. He told me that he would and that he'd bought the most expensive helmet at the store, just in case.

A little more than a month later, I received a call at home from the person pulling CQ duty. He told me Green had died in a fatal motorcycle accident while riding with his friend. Apparently, a car in the left lane hit Green's friend, who, in turn, struck him. Losing control, Green dumped the bike and struck the curb with his helmet. The impact was so strong it cracked the helmet and caused him severe head trauma. Sadly, he never even made it to the emergency room.

Green never took the motorcycle safety course. If he had, he might still be here today. His was the first memorial I'd attended where I personally knew the person that the rifle, boots and helmet represented. It was the most poignant moment in my life when I heard the roll call and he was not there to call out his name.

Things have changed a lot since I began riding in 1980. Fortunately, riders now are much more aware of the importance of riding safety. Today in the Army, we have a mandate that all Soldiers and Army Civilians who ride must first receive MSF-based training. Yet even so, we still suffer losses from motorcycle accidents. I still ride and always have my MSF training card on me. If Green had taken the training, maybe he'd still be riding today.

There is a saying that goes something like, "We know the moment when we were born, but we don't know the moment when we will die." I can tell you that getting safety training before you ride is the best way to ensure that latter date comes much later. «

> "I'd been **TRAINED** to jump out of **AIRPLANES**, but I **HADN'T** been **TRAINED** to **RIDE** a **MOTORCYCLE.**"

SOME LESSONS LAST A LIFETIME

JAMES ARRIOLA
Installation Safety Office
Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

A while back, I heard about a story of a child accidentally shooting his father and wondered, "How could that happen?" It brought back a memory from my younger days when I was growing up in the Philippines. I was about 12 years old, and my parents left my brother and me with an uncle for a vacation.

We'd been there about two weeks when my 12-year-old cousin proudly showed us his father's M16 rifle. Before handing me the rifle so I could get a closer look, my cousin took out the magazine and placed the safety lever on safe.

I raised the butt to my shoulder and aimed it outside. I had no idea how a rifle worked and I pulled the trigger, pretending to shoot targets. After watching me for a few minutes, my cousin wanted to show me how it worked. He grabbed the rifle from me, switched off the safety and pulled the trigger. BANG! Smoke filled the room as we stared at each other in shock. Almost immediately, we heard my uncle screaming and saw him running toward us.

As it turned out, the last time my uncle fired the rifle, a round automatically loaded in the chamber. Not knowing this, my cousin thought that the rifle was safe by simply removing the magazine. Although spared from my uncle's beating, the idea of accidentally shooting somebody — or being shot — stuck with me for the rest of my vacation. In fact, the incident still resonates with me today.

Now that I'm one of the "safety guys," I tend to run this scenario through my head. I try to make sense of it all and wonder what we could've done differently. We were young and didn't recognize the danger of handling a weapon. The rifle should've been locked up and not accessible to us. My uncle also should have talked to us about the dangers associated with handling a gun.

This incident taught me a valuable lesson at a young age and made me realize the importance of educating others — Soldiers, Civilians and Family members — on weapons-handling safety. We were lucky no one was shot that day, and my experience truly made an impact on how I view and do things to this very day. I'm a firm believer in learning from life-changing events. Learning from those mistakes may one day keep us from ending up seriously injured or, even worse, dead.

DID YOU KNOW?

No one is immune to weapons-handling accidents. In fiscal 2011, five Soldiers died because of negligent discharges. Remember to THINK weapons safety:

- **T**reat every weapon as if it is loaded.
- **H**andle every weapon with care.
- **I**dentify the target before you fire.
- **N**ever point the muzzle at anything you do not intend to shoot.
- **K**eep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center developed the Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox, https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety, to aid commanders and Leaders in the management of range operations and safe weapons handling. The toolbox provides a centralized collection of resources to establish and maintain safe and effective training programs for ranges and both military and privately owned weapons. Visit the site today!

PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS – AS REQUIRED

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5 GREG TURBERVILLE
Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization
U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence
Fort Rucker, Ala.

In the past decade, Army aviators have responded to our nation's needs in uncertain and high-risk environments by deploying many times to Iraq and Afghanistan. Flight crews routinely perform complex tasks and missions while operating at high altitudes, in high temperatures and at higher gross weights. Exposure to these challenges has been a learning experience for our community. Unfortunately, we are still repeating the same mistakes.

One of the causal factors most often cited in accident investigation findings is crew error or complacency in power management. In this context, consider power management to include the entire spectrum of factors and influences affecting the ability of the aircraft to overcome gravity.

This article is not intended to restate the training aspects all Army aircrews should be aware of through routine pre-deployment training events. My intent is to explain an initiative undertaken by the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization to address the trend in a more direct manner.

The Army already teaches aviators how to fly confidently in Afghanistan, emphasizing power management and wind current navigation at the High Altitude Mountain Environmental Training and the Colorado National Guard's High Altitude Army Training Site. Pilots address individual and collective training repeatedly in Readiness Level Progression and collective training events. However, while aviators are receiving essential and valuable training, Army aviation continues to experience an inordinate number of aircraft performance-related accidents.

DES has initiated a change to all currently fielded Army rotary-wing aircraft operators' manuals and checklists. This modification is quite simple and designed to create a mandatory crew event triggered at a critical time in the flight profile. In the next or near-term change publishing cycle, the revision will be added to the last step of the -10 checklist "Before Landing Check" for all mission design series. The text will be the same for all rotary-wing airframes to highlight the aerodynamics situation applies to all.

The change will include the addition of the step, "Performance Considerations – As Required." This addition will be the last step of the before-landing check. The goal is to make sure crews are aware of aircraft and environmental performance considerations that could negatively affect the transition from the en route phase of flight to the arrival phase. Because this additional step is now to be included in the before-landing check, the reminder or annunciation of the check will occur with each approach or transition the aircrew initiates to approach to land or hover.

The intent of the check is not to imply the aircrew must entirely re-compute its arrival performance planning card data. Rather, the additional check is intended to highlight the fact that the crew should reconsider the situational factors affecting power management prior to arrival or transitioning below effective translational lift. Those factors include things such as aircraft power available (in-ground effect and out-of-ground effect), power required, wind direction and speed, obstacles, gross weight, surface condition, rising terrain, escape or go-around plan, etc.

By augmenting this step in the operator's manual, it effectively removes it from the realm of optional training considerations or tactics, techniques and procedures and makes it a required crew action check. DES hopes this simple checklist modification will serve to alert future crews to consider performance factors before getting into a compromising arrival or pre-landing situation and potential accident scenario.

FYI

The before-landing check does vary by MDS, but here's the AH-64 with the new addition as step 5, for example:

BEFORE LANDING CHECK
- **Weapons Systems – Safe**
- **ASE – As required**
- **Tail Wheel Button – Lock**
- **Park Brake – As required**
- **Performance Considerations – As required**

ONE RIDE TOO MANY

KARL SEMLER
Marine Corps Air Station Yuma
Yuma, Ariz.

It was Dec. 26, 2004, and I was four months into my retirement from the U.S. Marine Corps. I had a great job making more money than I thought possible and was living the "American Dream."

I had neighbors that most folks would envy. They had all the "toys" — boats, jet skis, all-terrain vehicles and sand rails. Many times, I watched my neighbors load those toys onto trailers and head out for some fun, while I stood there pondering, "Where did I go wrong?"

All that changed during the 2004 holiday season. My wife gave me the green light to buy two ATVs and a trailer to transport them. I was shocked and jumped at the chance to buy a pair of 2003 Suzuki Z400s. They were the fastest models on the market at the time, and my neighbors were impressed. The look on my daughter's face was priceless. Kayla was happy to have a top-of-the-line ATV, complete with full safety gear, to go riding on Christmas Day.

Considering that Kayla had never operated any kind of vehicle, we started out slowly — riding behind our house in the open desert. She seemed to pick it up quickly. The excitement of getting her own ATV for Christmas and knowing her friends were out riding theirs was too much to handle. She asked me to take her to the sand dunes so she could join them. Not wanting to spoil a great "bonding" moment with my daughter, I said "yes" before considering the potential consequences. The next morning, we loaded our ATVs onto the trailer and drove 20 minutes to the sand dunes.

Kayla was proud, standing there in her new riding gear as I offloaded our ATVs. She heard her friends excitedly talking about how lucky she was that her first ATV was such a fast one. Once I had the ATVs off the trailer, Kayla jumped on hers and was ready to go. While I was putting on my gear, I overheard my next-door neighbor warning her that it can be very dangerous on the dunes with all the other riders. He suggested she go slow and get used to her ATV before getting too aggressive.

Our neighbor led us and a couple of Kayla's girlfriends from school, Nikki and Candy, to an area relatively free of other riders. Kayla followed me, doing a great job shifting through the gears and smiling like I hadn't seen in a while. We got to our location, parked on top of a sand dune and turned off our ATVs. The girls wanted to ride in a small area nearby. I had no problem with that as long as they stayed close and we could see them. I was happy to see Kayla was riding within her limits, so I began to relax and talk with my neighbor.

About five minutes later, I noticed Kayla was getting more confident — enough that I began to worry. I was about to go out and tell her to slow down when I saw her flying downhill wide open in third gear. At the bottom of the hill, she hit a small lip that launched her 20 feet through the air. I was shocked when the ATV hit the ground, bounced her over the handlebars and then ran over her. When I got to her, she was unconscious. It took about 20 seconds for her to come to. You can imagine how I felt, being the one who allowed her to get into that situation. We were blessed to see her stand up and walk away with nothing worse than a sore back.

The drive home was a long one, as I thought about how seriously she could have been injured. The only thing I'd done right during the entire process was to buy her the proper riding gear. I'd made sure she had a Department of Transportation-certified full-face helmet, long-sleeve padded shirt, riding pants and gloves. I'm 100 percent convinced that Kayla's helmet saved her from traumatic injuries.

Looking back, I wish I'd talked to the motorcycle experts at the base safety office before buying the ATVs. I'm sure they would have

suggested I buy a smaller, less-powerful model for her. What was I thinking when I bought a "race-ready" 400cc quad for a 13-year-old girl who'd never ridden before? I'm certain this accident wouldn't have happened had I purchased a less-powerful quad.

I was also at fault for thinking the 20-minute instructional ride I took her on Christmas Day was enough to make her a competent rider. At that time, I wasn't aware of the training available through the ATV Safety Institute (http://www.atvsafety.org/). I would highly recommend any parents purchasing an ATV for themselves or their children take that training.

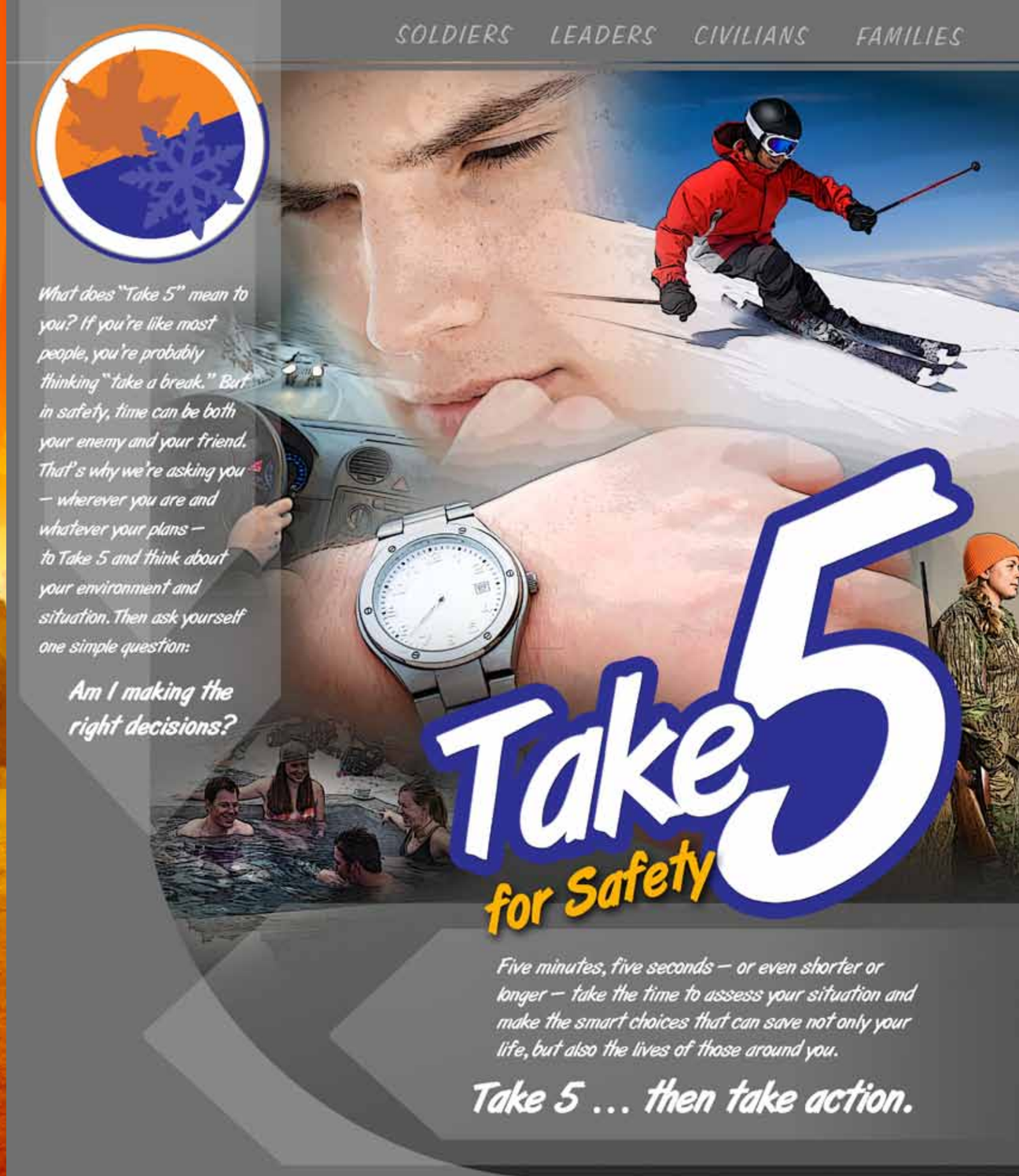
It was just a matter of time before my wife heard about the accident from our neighbors — Kayla and I sure didn't want to tell her. What amazed me was Kayla didn't protest when I sold both ATVs three days later. She'd already had one ride too many.

I learned an important lesson the hard way. When it comes to beginners on ATVs, the best way to end "upright" is to start off right. You can always go bigger when your skills get better. «

WINTER RIDING TIPS

Because of their ability to handle challenging terrain and conditions, ATVs are popular during the winter months with hunters, recreational riders and others who need the enhanced mobility they provide. Here are some useful safety tips to keep you safe during the winter months:

- **Install a set of hand warmers underneath your hand grips along with one for the throttle switch.**
- **Add an ATV windshield to keep you warmer by blocking the wind from your head, torso and hands.**
- **Use tires designed to get a good grip on the snow. Remember, wider tires have less ground pressure than narrower ones and are more likely to float and swim.**
- **Check your owner's manual to make sure you have the proper engine oil for the winter temperatures. This is especially important when starting a cold engine.**
- **Stay warm by dressing in multiple layers. Avoid wearing cotton. Instead, wear a thin, moisture-wicking base layer to avoid trapping sweat against your skin. Next, wear a thicker, warmer moisture-wicking layer. Finish up with a waterproof, breathable garment that will protect you from the wind while letting sweat escape.**
- **Wear warm, flexible footwear so you can effectively operate foot levers and pedals for shifting and braking.**
- **Wear a helmet — motocross helmets are an excellent choice — and install a breath box to prevent your face shield from fogging. Consider using goggles or face shields with dual-pane lenses that won't fog up.**



What does "Take 5" mean to you? If you're like most people, you're probably thinking "take a break." But in safety, time can be both your enemy and your friend. That's why we're asking you — wherever you are and whatever your plans — to Take 5 and think about your environment and situation. Then ask yourself one simple question:

Am I making the right decisions?

Take 5 for Safety

Five minutes, five seconds — or even shorter or longer — take the time to assess your situation and make the smart choices that can save not only your life, but also the lives of those around you.

Take 5 ... then take action.

ARMY STRONG. U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER https://safety.army.mil ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG A BAND OF BROTHERS & SISTERS

How Did Our Army Do?

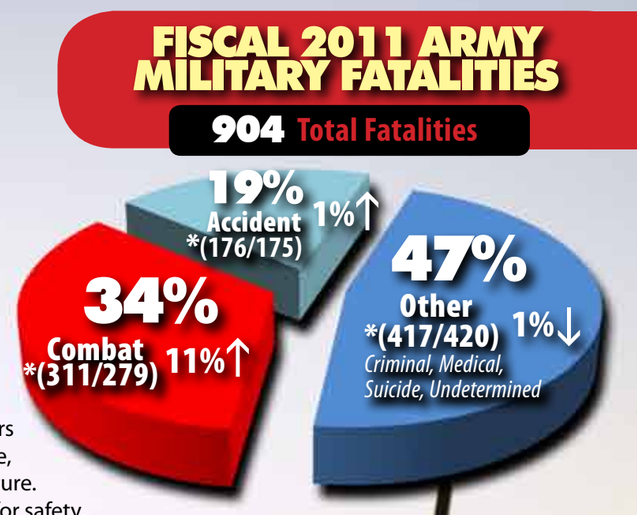
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM T. WOLF
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Our Army continues to make progress on safety: Accidental fatalities were once again at near-peacetime levels during fiscal 2011, with dramatic reductions in on-duty losses leading the way.

Now more than ever, Leaders from the squad up the chain of command "get" safety and its importance to the mission. They've gotten back to the basics of leadership — becoming more involved in pre-combat checks and inspections, taking a more active role in training and simply ensuring every standard is met, every time. By getting the mission done and doing it safely, today's Leaders are setting a superb example for the Soldiers in their charge, especially those who will assume leadership roles in the future.

Individual Soldiers are also assuming the responsibility for safety. Leaders can't be everywhere all the time, and the positive reductions we've experienced on duty show Soldiers are doing the right things: using restraint systems in tactical vehicles, exercising self discipline, following standing operating procedures on the job and mitigating hazards through composite risk management. Battle buddies are also making a difference by looking out for one another. Accidents can kill just as surely as the enemy in combat, a fact Soldiers have increasingly recognized during the past few years.

Every success comes with challenges, however, and off-duty fatalities remain our Army's most pressing safety concern. Privately owned vehicle accidents and other off-duty mishaps cost 136 Soldiers their lives in fiscal 2011, eight more than the previous year. Combined with the 40 Soldiers who died on duty, our Army began fiscal 2012 short 176 good men and women. But by learning from both the good and bad behind us, we can save even more lives in the year ahead.



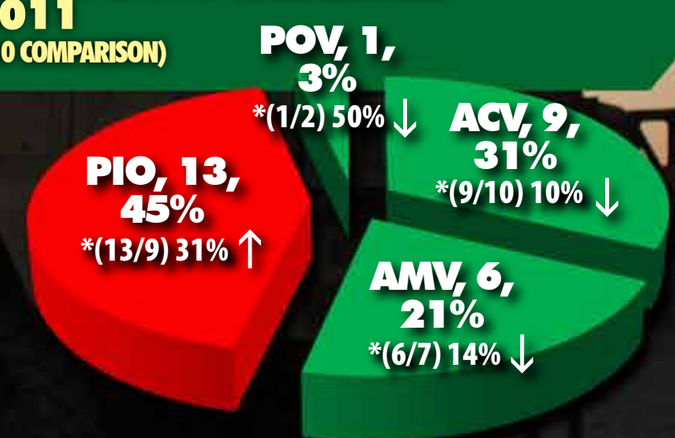
On Duty Ground

The positive downward trend in on-duty fatalities carried through fiscal 2011, with double-digit reductions experienced across nearly all accident categories. On-duty privately owned vehicle fatalities dropped by half, and aviation-related fatalities were down 31 percent for the year. Soldier fatalities in both Army motor vehicles and Army combat vehicles fell by 10 percent or more (14 percent and 10 percent, respectively), leaving personnel injury-other as the only category that experienced an increase during the year (up 31 percent).

But as remarkable as these strides in on-duty accident reduction are, critical safety issues remain prevalent in the spectrum of tactical operations. Especially urgent are rollovers in the MRAP family of vehicles, specifically the M-ATV. Eight Soldiers died in M-ATVs during fiscal 2011, all as the result of rollovers (a ninth Soldier was killed in an MRAP Cougar rollover). The demand for these vehicles in Afghanistan has increased exponentially during the past few years, and their role in operations there is invaluable. Therefore, it is vital that Leaders focus on driver licensing and crew drills, including egress training, to keep their vehicle crews in the fight.

Many iterations of MRAP vehicles are available to commanders, and drivers must be licensed and trained in the MRAP variant they are required to operate. There is no single driver training program that qualifies a Soldier in all vehicles; rather, separate training must be completed when a driver is assigned to a vehicle he or she is not licensed to operate. No two MRAP types are the same, and just because a Soldier has experience with one does not mean he or she can safety operate another. Past accidents have shown this is a fatal assumption, and Leaders must put a stop to unqualified driver assignments while enforcing standards like speed limits and restraint system use within their vehicle crews. Released in early 2011, Training Circular 7-31, MRAP Family of Vehicles Driver Training, is the new Army standard for MRAP training. All commanders with MRAPs in their vehicle fleets must ensure their drivers are being trained to TC 7-31 standards and that junior leaders are enforcing the directives contained therein.

Egress training is just as important to MRAP safety. After a similar device helped dramatically reduce rollover fatalities in HMMWVs, the Army



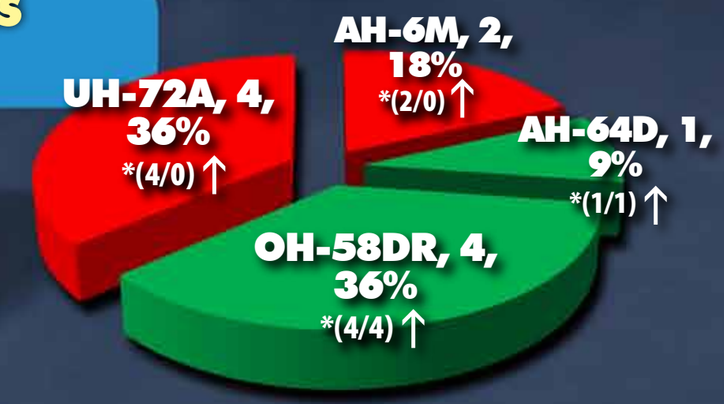
*Note: Fiscal Comparison (Fiscal 2011/Fiscal 2010)

introduced the MRAP Egress Trainer at certain sites in theater and installations worldwide. These trainers offer crews the toughest, most realistic training available outside actual combat operations and also provide Leaders a prime opportunity to engage with their crews on the importance of restraint systems, thorough PCC/PCI and proper mission planning. Leaders of units rotating to theater must make time in their training schedules for crews to practice rollover drills in one of these important training devices.

Leaders should also take advantage of additional MRAP safety resources readily available to them. Complementing TC 7-31 is the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's MRAP Safety Awareness toolkit, available online at https://safety.army.mil. The kit includes a training support package, safety presentation, graphic training aid, equipment stowage guide and informational videos highlighting a variety of MRAP safety issues. However, training guides and videos are merely tools; Leaders must continually reinforce the importance of rollover drills, restraint system use and adherence to standards on every mission, for these are the only proven methods for both surviving and reducing MRAP accidents.

Equally troubling as MRAP rollovers is the increase in on-duty PI-O fatalities.

AVIATION FATALITIES FISCAL 2011
(WITH FISCAL 2010 COMPARISON)



Note: Fiscal Comparison (Fiscal 2011/Fiscal 2010)

With four and three fatalities respectively, negligent discharges and Airborne accidents comprised more than half the on-duty PI-O losses during the year, followed closely by heat injury deaths. Rigid standards exist for clearing tactical weapons, and Leaders must ensure these standards are followed to the letter to prevent needless losses. The USACR/Safety Center's Range and Weapons Safety Toolbox contains standards information and training aids to assist Leaders in ensuring their Soldiers stay safe around tactical weapons. Leaders should also closely follow weather forecasts and heat advisories when their Soldiers are working or training outdoors. Precautions like rest and hydration breaks provide some measure of protection against the heat, but Leaders must ultimately make the call in deciding when their Soldiers are most in danger of injury or death.

On Duty Air

An overall 31 percent decrease in aviation fatalities was one of the best news stories of fiscal 2011, Army aviation's safest year since Sept. 11, 2001. The UH-60 community delivered the most notable number of the year — a 100 percent reduction in fatalities, down to zero from 11 in fiscal 2010. Crew deaths in the AH-64 and OH-58 airframes remained steady with the previous year, leaving the AH-6 and UH-72 as the only areas of increase in 2011 (one fatal accident with multiple fatalities was recorded for each aircraft). Considering the demand for aviation assets in theater, training hours logged in CONUS and the conditions in which Army aviation operates worldwide, fiscal 2011's safety performance is a stellar achievement.

One interesting aspect of aviation's 2011 numbers is that, despite a decline in Class A and B accidents, Class C mishaps actually increased during the year. However, this can be seen as a positive indicator of healthy learning organizations applying lessons learned from lesser incidents and mitigating risk more effectively. Aviation provides an excellent example for the rest of the Army in that, while accidents can and do happen, crews continually learn from and overcome mistakes made by others.

Training remains the most important element of safe aviation operations, whether in theater or at home. During the past several years, the Army has increased its investment in high-altitude and environmental training opportunities, using the HAMET program and HAATS. This training closely replicates conditions in theater and provides an excellent opportunity for pilots and crews to familiarize themselves with safe operations in adverse environments. Leaders must also take advantage of the Army's Aircrew Coordination Training-Enhanced program, which prepares crews to work together and communicate clearly in every situation. This program should be treated as an ongoing training tool rather than an annual requirement, for communication is the most critical skill any crewmember can possess in the cockpit. Additionally, Leaders should stay focused on emerging aviation trends to prevent similar accidents from occurring within their own formations.

As important as manned aircraft are to our Army's missions, we cannot forget the contributions of unmanned aircraft systems to

our operations overseas. While UAS accidents might not seem as urgent as manned incidents with fatalities, the fact is these systems are vital combat multipliers costing into millions of dollars, and we lost 12 in fiscal 2011. Leaders must ensure their units have up-to-date reporting systems in place and a trained safety officer designated for reporting duties when mishaps occur. Only by sharing this data can we report lessons learned and keep our fleet of UAS available to commanders and Soldiers.

Off Duty

As in years past, off-duty safety posed the biggest challenge for our Army in fiscal 2011. Overall fatalities were up 6 percent from the previous year, due to an 80 percent increase in off-duty PI-O deaths (led by accidental drownings) and an 18 percent increase in fatal motorcycle accidents. Deaths in sedans and other POVs (truck, SUV, van, moped and ATV) were down 16 percent collectively, and pedestrian fatalities — a critical concern during fiscal 2010 — dropped 67 percent for the year. These successes show we can turn the arrow down off duty, but not until Leaders and Soldiers tackle the ongoing problem of indiscipline.

Speed, lack of seat belts or personal protective equipment and alcohol use remain among the top three factors cited in fatal off-duty accidents. In fact, during fiscal 2011, several Soldiers killed on motorcycles were confirmed to have been traveling at speeds of 90 mph or more. An even greater number involved Leaders at the rank of E5 and above. This is an untenable situation for our Army, and Leaders at every echelon must put a singular focus on curbing off-duty indiscipline within their ranks.

The easiest way for Leaders to engage with their Soldiers on riding safety is the Motorcycle Mentorship Program, an ongoing initiative that pairs experienced and novice riders together to foster safe riding habits. With the vast number of Leaders who own motorcycles and enjoy riding during their off-duty time, the MMP offers a perfect opportunity for every junior rider within our Army to learn what right looks like on the road. The POV/POM Toolbox, located at https://safety.army.mil, contains insights and best practices from successful MMP chapters across the Army and tips for Leaders interested in establishing programs on their installations.

New regulatory guidance is also aimed at making our Soldiers safer while riding and driving. The Army Progressive Motorcycle Program, which outlines expanded training events at specific time intervals, was recently mandated by rapid action revision to Army Regulation 385-10, The Army Safety Program. The PMP is comprised of the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Basic RiderCourse, Military SportBike RiderCourse or Basic RiderCourse2 (dependent upon type of motorcycle owned), motorcycle refresher training and sustainment training. By continually re-engaging riders, the PMP promotes safe riding behaviors, refreshes skills and establishes lifelong learning within the Army's motorcycle community. Additionally, Remedial Driver Training (also known as "Roadrageous") is a training program that targets Soldiers with driving offenses and known high-risk driving behaviors. More information on both programs is available via the Privately Owned Vehicle Safety Tab at https://safety.army.mil.

Fiscal 2011's exponential increase in off-duty PI-O accidents also merits immediate Leader attention. Of the 27 Soldier deaths that fell within this category, nearly half occurred on the water. Early in the year, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine command released "Off Duty, On Guard," a great tool Leaders can share with their Soldiers to heighten awareness of off-duty risks. Through a series of interactive vignettes, users assume the identity of a specific Soldier and have to make decisions on his or her behalf. The tool shows the consequences of bad decisions on the water, on the road and at home and is an excellent eye-opener for Soldiers who might not see risky behavior within themselves. Off Duty, On Guard is available on the USACR/Safety Center website.

Conclusion

Reducing preventable accidents during a time of war is unprecedented in our Army's history, yet our Leaders, Soldiers, Families and Civilians have done so nearly every year since fiscal 2005. This accomplishment offers proof of the power of engagement and CRM. Leaders and Soldiers clearly get safety on duty, and cultivating that same mindset off duty remains our challenge for the new year. By working together, staying engaged and using all the tools at our disposal, we will keep our Army both safe and strong!

Editor's note: All data cited in this article were current as of Dec. 5, 2011. Late reports or modifications to existing data may change statistics and findings.

BLACK HAWK - 1 PLASTIC TARP - 0

NAME WITHHELD UPON REQUEST

The sun had just started to peek out over the horizon as our flight of four Black Hawks approached a small Iraqi village. Our insertion team was to conduct a sweep of the village, looking for weapons caches and materials for making improvised explosive devices. We had two AH-64Ds and a Predator with us for support, and two F-16s were nearby in case things got ugly on the ground. We were briefed that while the entire village was unsympathetic to the U.S., they were not expected to resist.

The insertion was not overly complicated, but our four Hawks were split between three different landing zones. Chalks 1 and 2 were to land in a plowed field near a house on the northeast side of the village. Chalks 3 and 4 each had their own small LZ about 500 meters south. I was the pilot in command of Chalk 2. In our pre-mission planning, we studied a lot of satellite imagery and knew exactly what we were looking for.

As we hit our release point, one of the Apaches gave us the call that the LZs were all clear. We gave our insertion team a one-minute warning and continued inbound. The only hazards we identified in the imagery were a small canal and a set of power lines along the north side of our LZ. Our approach was from the south, and even though we weren't flying into the rising sun, we were having difficulty seeing. On short final, we recognized a second set of wires running directly across the center of our LZ and the vegetation had grown up, making the entire south half unusable. Our two options were either to land between the two sets of wires, which were about three rotor discs apart, or to continue north of our intended LZ and land across the canal.

Chalk 1 started their approach between the wires and it looked good, so we picked a spot a safe distance from their left side and started our own approach. My crew and I were focused primarily on the two sets of wires in front of and behind our aircraft. As we lowered the aircraft between the wires, I caught something out of the corner of my eye that made my heart sink with fear. Several long streams of white plastic tarp were rising out of the field beneath the helicopter. Our focus had been on the previously unseen set of wires and, due to poor visibility, we didn't notice that the rows of plowed land beneath us were covered in heavy-duty plastic tarps. We had no time to react as the tarps rose up into our main rotor system.

The helicopter shook violently as the tarps were drawn into our tail rotor. My PI (a more experienced aviator) halted our descent to see if we could climb out. He was distressed but never wavered on the controls. Our torque shot up to 134 percent for a second or two before settling at about 85 percent (never exceeding our transient torque limits). The crew chiefs remained calm and immediately started explaining the situation to us, keeping their eyes on the wires, our passengers and the LZ.

> "The crew chiefs **REMAINED CALM** and immediately started explaining the situation to us, **KEEPING THEIR EYES** on **THE WIRES**, our **PASSENGERS** and the **LZ**."

Despite the excessive vibrations, we still had complete control of the helicopter and were able to climb out from between the wires and set it down on the other side of the canal. Our insertion team jumped out to set up a perimeter and I immediately got on the radio. Nobody answered my initial calls, and as I was cross-tuning our radios, I saw two of the Hawks fly by and out of the area.

The last remaining Hawk flew a small orbit around us and landed just off our nose, facing us. I finally reached our flight air mission commander on our internal frequency. He was also a maintenance test pilot and informed us that our tail rotor was a solid white disc of plastic. We briefly discussed shutting down and calling the Downed Aircraft Recovery Team, but they were an hour away and this was hostile territory.

The AMC asked if we could control the helicopter. When we acknowledged we had complete control, he recommended we fly to the nearest forward operating base, which was about 10 minutes away. We decided to give it a shot. I had the insertion team push away from the helicopter for the takeoff in case things got a little crazy. My PI picked it up to a hover to check the stability and then executed a smooth takeoff. About two minutes later, most of the plastic was thrown off the tail rotor and a majority of the vibrations ceased. The rest of the flight to the FOB was uneventful.

Upon landing and shutting down, we surveyed the damage. The stabilator was dented and would need replacing and our FM whip antenna on the tail was torn off. Our crew chiefs removed the rest of the plastic from the main and tail rotors and the AMC/MTP took a good look at everything. We all decided the helicopter was in good enough shape to continue the mission, so we took off to complete the extraction.

If my crew and I hadn't been so focused on the wires, we might have seen the plastic on the ground before it was sucked up into our rotor system. However, the calmness of the crew chiefs, the aircrew coordination between the four of us and the incredible durability of the Black Hawk ensured the mission was completed and everyone returned home safely.

ON THIN ICE

GEORGE WYATT
Installation Safety Office
Fort Campbell, Ky.

It's easy to get that kid-like feeling at the sight of the glittering beauty of snow and ice. In fact, even in my mid-50s, I still find myself getting excited about the prospect of snow. However, I've also learned that snow and ice are not always so grand if we fail to take the proper precautions.

My mother used what I think is an old southern phrase — "all stoved up" — to describe a myriad of sore, painful or aching bones and muscles resulting from overwork or an accident. My hope is you will protect yourself and prevent being all stoved up this winter because of a fall on the snow and ice.

Although statistics vary among national recordkeeping agencies, it is accurate to say that thousands of Americans become victims of snow- and ice-related falls each year. These accidents result in days, months and even years of pain and agony among the U.S. workforce and, in some cases, permanent disability and death. We even experience these types of accidents among our federal working populations on and off Army installations. Each year, Soldiers and Civilians injure themselves by slipping on ice, resulting in lost workdays. Typical injuries related to these type falls include pelvis, arm, elbow and wrist fractures. Other common injuries include concussions, facial bone fractures and broken teeth.

It's easy to prevent these types of accidents with a little awareness and some precautions. One of the simplest safety measures you can take is wearing the proper shoes for the weather conditions. Common sense should tell us that smooth leather- or plastic-soled shoes are not conducive to walking safely over packed snow and ice. Instead, wear a nonslip rubber- or neoprene-soled shoe or boot that has grooves. Rubber overshoes or boots are fine if they have similar specifications. If you must wear street shoes to work, consider carrying them with you and changing when you get inside the building. The same logic applies to women with respect to heels.

Another thing to consider is the temperature of the soles. The heater in your car warms your shoes to a comfortable temperature. When you reach your snow-packed or icy parking place, human nature tells you to fling open the door and make a mad dash to the warmth inside. Here's what happens when you do this: The warm shoe sole hits the ice and immediately melts the surface, creating a thin pool of water between the surface and the shoe and setting up a hazardous condition. Instead, plant your feet firmly on the icy surface while still sitting in the car seat for a few moments until the shoe temperature cools down and doesn't pool water under your shoes. Maintain a good two-hand hold on the car door when you get out and establish firm footing before walking.

You should also dress for the occasion. Winter conditions call for more clothing. In addition to providing warmth, thick bulky layers will provide protection in case you fall. Consider a good cold weather hat, thick knit hat or ski hat for warmth and head protection. Gloves, scarves and earmuffs are also useful.

Fresh snow is usually easy to traverse without falling but conditions such as partial melting and packing of the snow can change the situation in short order. Freezing rain, sleet and wintery mix conditions can be particularly hazardous. Remember to treat walking surfaces that look wet or are shaded by trees or buildings as if they're still frozen, even if you have observed melting in other areas.

There are some simple and helpful techniques to remember when walking on packed snow and ice. Choose designated walkways, preferably walkways that have already been deiced. Now is not the time to be taking shortcuts across snow banks and negotiating untraveled areas where hidden obstacles may lurk under the snow and ice. In some cases, walkways may be extremely slippery from ice melting and refreezing. Therefore, the best option for traction and ease of travel could be the grassy area adjacent to the walkway.

Even our best efforts at preventing a fall can fail, so I would like to mention a few techniques you can use to help reduce the risk of injury if you do take a spill. Try to relax the muscles in your body when you fall. If you're falling forward, put your arms in front of your face and turn your head left or right. If you're falling backward, tuck your chin into your chest to minimize the whiplash effect on your neck and the back of the head. If possible, put your hands behind your head. If you fall sideways, allow your upper arm to take the impact. I've had some success in using my hands to break a fall, but others have sprained or broken fingers, wrists and elbows in doing this. I normally don't recommend using the hands and arms for anything other than protecting the face and head during a fall, especially for those of us who may be a little older and carry a little more bodyweight than we should.

Hopefully, you will find something that I have mentioned useful for this and future winters to help keep you safe when the skies open up to freezing rain, sleet, snow or the wintery mix.

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am i a good driver?

JASON WALSH
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento, Calif.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 32,788 deaths on American roads in 2010. That means one person died on our roadways every 16 minutes that year. The good news is that according to NHTSA, fatalities have been declining during the past five years. Experts believe this is due to the strict enforcement of seat belt and car seat use, improvements in overall vehicle design safety and increased attention to safety when building or refurbishing roadways.

However, when it comes to staying out of the statistics column, the responsibility rests on you. Ask yourself truthfully, "Am I a good driver?" Most of us would answer, "Yes, I'm a great driver." But are we? The truth is most of us, perhaps without thinking about it, engage in dangerous activities while driving that make us anything but great, safe drivers.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I text, dial a cellphone or engage in a thoughtful conversation with someone in the vehicle?
- Do I play with the radio or CD player while driving?
- Do I fish around in the glove compartment looking for something?
- Do I comb my hair or check or apply makeup?
- Do I engage in "dashboard dining" — trying to eat and drink while going down the road?
- Do I light a cigarette or fumble for a dropped lighter?
- Do I read maps or enter locations into my GPS while driving?
- Do I discipline restless children in the car or feed them snacks?
- Do I stare in amazement at how bad others are driving and then get upset or frustrated and drive aggressively?

Unfortunately, most of us can answer "yes" to at least a few of these questions. According to www.smartmotorst.com, there are four factors that contribute to accidents:

1. Equipment failure
2. Roadway design
3. Poor vehicle maintenance
4. Driver behavior

More than 95 percent of motor vehicle accidents involve some degree of driver behavior combined with one of the other three factors. When the facts are truthfully presented, however, driver behavior is usually the primary cause. Many accidents are caused by driving distracted, excessive speed or aggressive driver behavior. So what can each of us do to stay safe?

- Make sure you use cellphones safely. The safest thing is to make your calls before you set out. If you receive a phone call while you are driving, let the caller leave a message and then pull over to a safe area and return the call. Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.
- Set a good example. Consider how your children might be observing your unsafe habits and assume your actions are something normal that everyone does. If you don't want your child talking on a cellphone while driving, don't do it yourself.
- Be aware that using a hands-free device can still distract you. In fact, a study done by the University of Utah found using a cellphone while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent.
- Stop before checking maps and addresses, looking at paperwork or dealing with similar distractions.
- Plan and map out your trip before you leave home.
- Don't allow arguments or stressful conversations with passengers to divert driver attention from the road.
- We know better than to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, but fatigue, stress and strong emotions such as anger can also impair the ability to drive safely.

So, how do you rate yourself now? Are you as great a driver as you first thought, or are there some areas where you need to improve? The good news is if you're reading this article, there's still time to change your driving habits and stay out of the statistics column. The responsibility is yours.

Putting the Cold on Hold

ART POWELL
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

When it comes to the cold, not all injuries are created equal. Due to their training and issued gear, Soldiers are considerably better prepared than the general population to stay safe in even the coldest conditions. That's why it might come as a surprise to learn frostbite — among the most serious of all winter ailments — is the leading cold weather injury reported in our Army.

Whether they work inside a heated building or stay outside for long periods of time, all members of the Army team must be aware of the hazards of cold weather. Training for and preventing cold injuries is a command and leadership function, as well as a personal responsibility for every Soldier. And while the cold makes job-related tasks more difficult, it does not make them impossible. They key to overcoming harsh conditions and successfully completing the mission lies with understanding cold weather injuries and how to prevent them.

The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center offers the following descriptions of the most common cold weather injuries:

Frostbite

Frostbite is the freezing of skin tissue that can extend through all layers of the skin and freeze muscle and bone. Frozen skin may turn red and then gray-blue with blisters. In the worst cases, the skin dies and turns blue-black; at this stage, amputation is often required. Deep frozen skin feels "wooden" to the touch with zero mobility of the affected body part. Instantaneous frostbite can occur when skin comes

PREVENTING COLD INJURIES

Individuals can safely work and play in cold environments if they are properly prepared and understand basic control measures to prevent cold weather injuries.

Keep the Body Warm

- Keep moving by exercising big muscles (arms and legs) to keep warm.
- Avoid alcohol use. Alcohol impairs the body's ability to shiver and gives a false sense of warmth.
- Avoid all tobacco products, as they decrease blood circulation to the skin.
- Eat all meals to maintain energy.
- Drink water or warm non-caffeinated fluids to prevent dehydration. Drinking warm liquids like decaffeinated tea and hot chocolate that contain sugar provides energy to help the body generate additional heat.
- Limit the amount of time spent outside on extremely cold days and periodically move into warm areas such as warming tents.

Wear Proper Clothing

- Wear several layers of loose clothing rather than one or two bulky layers. Air trapped between layers acts as insulation against the cold. Layers may also be removed if you become too hot. Additionally, loose clothing allows blood to circulate to the extremities.
- Ensure all clothing is in good condition, clean and dry. Change wet, damp clothes immediately.

Protect Feet

- Carry extra pairs of socks and change damp socks immediately. Use foot powder to help absorb moisture.
- Avoid tight socks and boots, and never over-tighten boots or shoes.
- Wear overshoes to keep boots and socks clean and dry.

Protect Hands

- Wear gloves, mittens or gloves and mittens with inserts to avoid frostbite injuries.
- Keep gloves and mittens clean and dry. Change damp gloves immediately.
- Warm hands under clothes if they become numb.
- Avoid skin contact with snow, fuel or bare metal that has been exposed to the cold for extended periods.

Protect Head, Face and Ears

- Wear a hat. As much as 70 percent or more of the body's heat is lost through an uncovered head.
- Cover your face and ears with a scarf to prevent frostbite injuries. In combination, a hat and scarf protect the skin and retain body heat.
- Warm your face and ears by covering, but not rubbing, with your hands.
- Wear sunscreen.
- Exercise facial muscles to help maintain circulation.

Protect Friends and Family

- Watch for signs of frostbite and other cold weather injuries in your buddies.
- Ask about and assist with rewarming the feet, hands, ears and face.
- Immediately treat persons showing any signs or symptoms of cold injury.
- Remove sick and injured individuals from the cold; they are very susceptible to cold injuries.

More information on cold weather safety and many other winter safety topics is available on the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center website at https://safety.army.mil under the Fall/Winter Safety campaign tab.

into contact with super-cooled liquids, including petroleum, oils and lubricants, antifreeze and alcohol, all of which remain liquid at temperatures as low as minus 40 F.

Frostnip

Frostnip is the freezing of the top layers of the skin and is considered the first degree of frostbite. Frostnip usually results from short-duration exposure to cold air or contact with a cold object like metal. Exposed skin such as the cheeks, ears, fingers and wrists are more likely to develop frostnip.

Chilblains

Chilblains are nonfreezing cold injuries that result from repeated, prolonged skin exposure to cold and wet (high humidity) temperatures above freezing. Exposed skin becomes red, tender and hot to the touch and is usually itchy. These symptoms can worsen to an aching, prickly (pins and needles) sensation and then numbness. Chilblains can develop in exposed skin in only a few hours. The most commonly affected areas are the ears, nose, fingers and toes.

Immersion foot/trench foot

Immersion foot is a nonfreezing injury that results from prolonged exposure to wet conditions between 32 and 60 F or inactivity with damp socks and boots. Immersing feet in cold water, infrequent changing of socks, poor hygiene and allowing sweat to accumulate in boots or gloves will soften the skin, causing tissue loss and often infection.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a potential life-threatening condition defined as a general cooling of the body's core temperature below 95 F (normal body temperature is 98.6 F). Hypothermia occurs when body heat loss exceeds heat production due to prolonged cold exposure. Although hypothermia is usually associated with cold climates, it can occur at temperatures well above freezing, especially when a person is exposed to wet conditions for an extended period of time.

Dehydration

Dehydration, most commonly associated with hot weather, is a lack of water in the body. It is very easy to become dehydrated in cold weather, and many individuals fail to drink enough liquids and underestimate fluid loss from sweating. Proper hydration is especially important in cold weather because dehydration adversely affects the body's resistance to the cold, increasing the chance of injury.

"**TRAINING** for and **PREVENTING** cold **INJURIES** is a **COMMAND** and **LEADERSHIP** function, as well as a personal **RESPONSIBILITY** for every **SOLDIER.**"

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Dangerous Slopes

MAUREEN PIKAL
U.S Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

One of the many great things about being stationed in Europe is the skiing. Every year, my Family goes on several ski trips. Our battle rhythm is for the kids to take two days of lessons before they get to ski with their dad. Our 12- and 13-year-old children are excellent skiers like their dad; they've been taking lessons since they were 4 and 5. I, on the other hand, am an intermediate skier at best.

Last Thanksgiving, the kids and I went to Zell am See, Austria, for three days of skiing. Unfortunately, like so many military Families, Max and Claire's dad was not with us because he was deployed. After unloading the car, we headed straight to the rental shop to pick up gear. My kids hate this part because they have to keep putting the gear on and off, as the equipment is adjusted specifically for their size, weight and skiing ability. My husband and I also insist the kids always wear ski helmets. They complain, but the rule is they wear helmets or they don't ski.

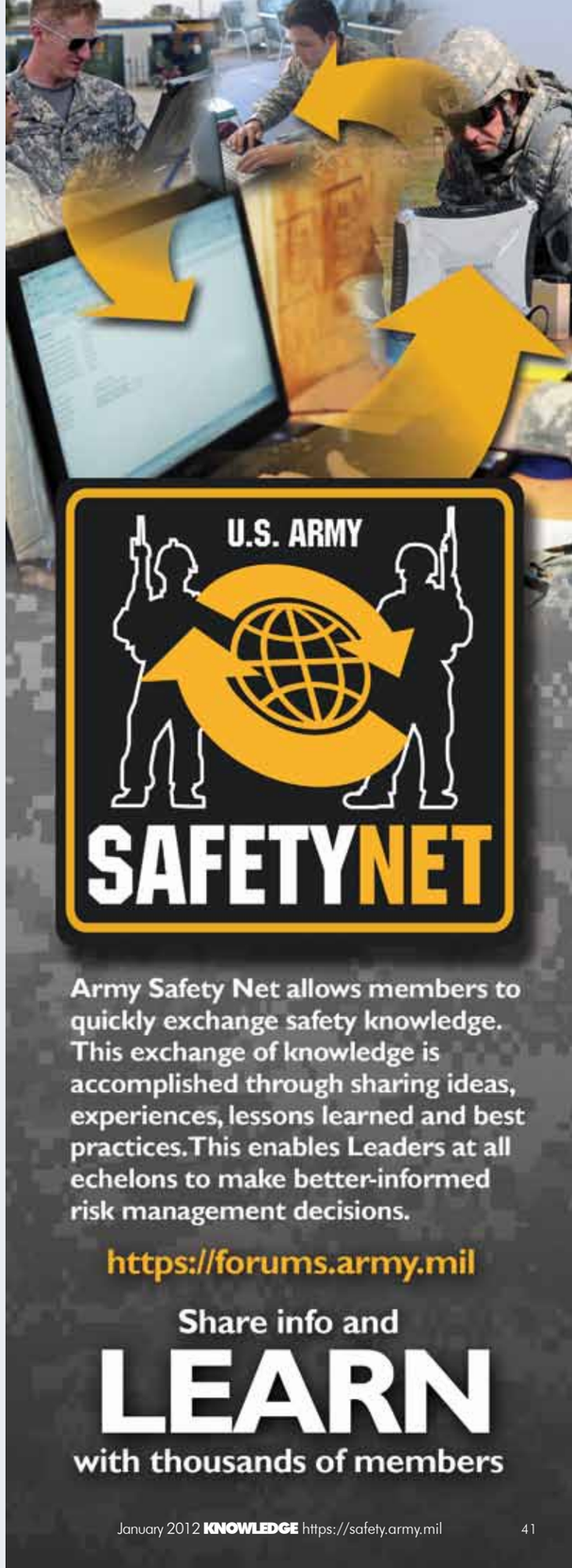
At the end of the first day of lessons, Claire said, "Thanks, mom; I am so glad I had on my helmet because I wiped out so bad and hit my head so hard I would have been knocked out!" Max proceeded to tell me how bad and how often Claire wiped out. Undaunted by a day full of wipeouts, they then informed me they didn't want to ski with me on the third day because "my skiing stinks." Realizing they wouldn't have fun on the "easy" slopes, I agreed and arranged for a private instructor take them skiing the last day.

The next day, I went up on the mountain with the kids and their instructor. When they hit the ski lifts, I parked myself, with book, at the lodge. We later met for lunch, and the kids and instructor were off again.

Not long after, I heard my son screaming, "Mom! Mom! Claire got run over!" I looked up and saw a very animated ski instructor coming toward me with Claire in tow. The instructor was explaining in a mixture of English and German that she did not pursue the two skiers who did this because she was concerned with Claire's condition. After I verified both my children were OK, I listened to the rest of the story. An out-of-control skier hit and knocked Claire to the ground. His buddy, who was also out of control, ran over Claire's head with his skis. Claire did not get up and laid on the ground until the ski instructor came to her. Claire's ski helmet had a huge two-and-half-inch-wide gouge running from the back to the front-right temple. The two thugs who ran Claire over stopped, looked at her on the ground and then took off.

The most effective way to prevent any ski injury is to know the rules of the slopes, take lessons and ski within your abilities. If you ski, chances are you will collide with another skier, snowboarder or some stationary object (maybe a tree or pole). Why wouldn't you wear a helmet? I am 100 percent positive Claire would have died or been permanently brain damaged had she not been wearing a ski helmet that day.

Click the image above with a smartphone for more information about safety on the slopes.



The ice cream CHASER

BLANCA CAMPOS
Fleet Support Branch
Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Let's face it; a lot us enjoy a few "cold ones" from time to time. But what about following those beers with an ice cream chaser? For most, it probably doesn't sound too appetizing, does it? Well, my strange cravings one night, combined with my ignorance and peer pressure, nearly got the best of me. Here's my story.

One of my buddies invited several of my friends and me to a party she was having at her house. After drinking for a while, we started a challenge to see who could hold the most beer. I really didn't want to play because I had to drive back to my place. However, peer pressure got the best of me. I'm the kind of person who has a hard time turning down a challenge.

Our beer drinking escalated to playing cards and taking shots. I'd have never guessed drinking so much would make me hungry for ice cream. However, as we kept drinking, my craving for ice cream got worse, so I decided to sneak out of the party to get some.

As I was stumbling to get my shoes on, one of my sober friends realized I was heading out the door and asked, "Where are you going?" Caught red-handed, I simply looked up and said, "Uh, nowhere," and went back and joined the party. Still, I wanted some ice cream and, as the party went on, I tried sneaking out again. However, another friend caught me this time. "Stro," as we called her, also was drunk when she asked me, "Where are you going?" I told her, "To the store," and she immediately asked, "Can I come too?"

I was buzzed, so I wasn't thinking too clearly and decided to take her and another of my drunken friends with me. As I drove to the store, I remember seeing a police car. However, I was apparently driving normally enough not to be pulled over.

We finally arrived at the store and went directly to the ice cream section. We grabbed some ice cream and jumped back into the car to head back to the party. Unfortunately, one of the problems with being buzzed is you tend to forget things. Without realizing it, I'd left my cellphone on the store counter. As we headed back to the party, I decided to have a little fun and started doing "donuts" in an empty parking lot. When I decided I'd had enough, we drove back to the party.

As it turned out, trying to sneak back into the party didn't go as planned. Some of our friends noticed Stro and I were missing and went outside to look for us. They got worried when they didn't see my car and I didn't answer my phone, which I'd accidentally left at the store.

When we entered the house, everyone just looked at us. Because I was buzzed and not in complete control of my senses, I didn't realize what I'd done was wrong. They asked me why I'd left and why I hadn't answered the phone. All I could say was, "I don't know." Ultimately, the cashier answered my phone and told my friends where I'd left it.

My friend drove me to the store to pick up my phone and took me home. The following morning, I was told what I had done. I couldn't believe I'd been dumb enough to jeopardize my life and those of others the way I did. I was lucky I didn't cause an accident and kill myself or someone else. I could have lost everything just because I'd decided to drink and drive.

Now when I go out and know I'm going to drink, I either have a designated driver or give my keys to someone who is not drinking. Looking back at that night, I should have asked myself whether drinking and driving was really worth it. And, most importantly, I should have asked myself while I was still sober enough to give a straight answer.

LOST

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-64D

CLASS C

- The aircraft contacted the ground during a single-engine demonstration, resulting in damage to the turret assembly and main landing gear.

OH-58C

CLASS B

- The aircraft engine failed during flight training while at 200 feet above ground level and 70 knots indicated airspeed. The aircraft touched down hard in a field following an autorotation, resulting in a severed tailboom and damage to the landing gear.

UH-60L

CLASS C

- The aircraft main rotor blades made contact with the tail rotor driveshaft during a dust landing.

RQ-7B

CLASS B

- The unmanned aircraft failed to reach optimal airspeed for takeoff and crashed.

GROUND

ACV

CLASS A

- The gunner in a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle was killed when it overturned while towing another vehicle to maintenance. The Soldier was wearing a gunner restraint system.

CLASS B

- An MRAP was damaged when a fire started during a movement. The crew initiated the fire suppression system. One crewmember suffered smoke-inhalation injuries.

Personnel Injury

CLASS A

- A Soldier died of a suspected heat injury while participating in a PT run.
- Two Soldiers drowned when they encountered high-tide conditions while attempting to wade from an islet back to shore. Two other Soldiers were rescued by kayakers.
- A Soldier died after he was found unresponsive in the water. The Soldier had been scuba diving about 50 yards off shore.
- A Soldier was killed when he was struck with a round from the M2 he was clearing.

CLASS B

- A Soldier suffered a permanent partial disability injury when the 12-guage shotgun he was clearing discharged a round into his foot.
- A Soldier suffered a spinal injury when he fell to the ground while participating in recreational repelling.

CLASS C

- A Soldier was injured after falling from a horse during rider certification training.

DRIVING

POV

CLASS A

- A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his vehicle in inclement weather and struck a tree. The Soldier was wearing his seat belt.
- Three Soldiers were killed when the driver lost control of his vehicle in an extended left-hand curve and collided with an approaching vehicle.
- A Soldier died when he lost control of his vehicle, left the road and struck a tree.
- A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his vehicle, went into the median and overturned.

POM

CLASS A

- A Soldier was killed when his motorcycle collided with a car that violated right of way at an intersection. The Soldier was wearing the proper personal protective equipment and possessed a motorcycle endorsement on his license.
- A Soldier suffered permanent total disability injuries when he lost control while negotiating a curve and was thrown from his bike. The Soldier had received both basic and advanced rider training.
- A Soldier was killed when he collided with a sedan at a residential intersection. The Soldier was licensed and wearing the proper PPE, but suffered fatal injuries when he lost his helmet in the collision.
- A Soldier riding with four other Soldiers was killed when he lost control, went off the road and crashed into a tree. The Soldier was wearing the proper PPE.

LOSSES AVIATION — FISCAL 2011 Class A/Fatalities thru November 2011

ATTACK	0/0
RECON	0/0
UTILITY	2/1
CARGO	1/0
TRAINING	0/0
FIXED-WING	0/0
UAS	1/0
TOTAL	4/1

as of Dec. 6, 2011

LOSSES GROUND — FISCAL 2011 Class A/Fatalities thru November 2011

AMV	4/1
ACV	2/1
PERSONNEL INJURY (includes weapons-handling accidents)	4/4
FIRE/ EXPLOSIVE	0/0
PROPERTY DAMAGE	0/0
TOTAL	10/6

as of Dec. 6, 2011

LOSSES POV/POM — FISCAL 2011 Class A/Fatalities thru November 2011

CAR	7/7
SUV/JEEP	2/2
TRUCK	2/2
MOTORCYCLE	5/4
PEDESTRIAN	1/1
OTHER* (*Includes vans, ATVs, snowmobiles and bicycles)	0/0
TOTAL	17/16

as of Dec. 6, 2011

Fiscal Year 2011: 15 — Three Year Average: 17

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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.

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