

**IN A 'PINCH': PREVENTING PRE-DEPLOYMENT ACCIDENTS**

# KNOWLEDGE

VOL. 6 MARCH 2012

OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY

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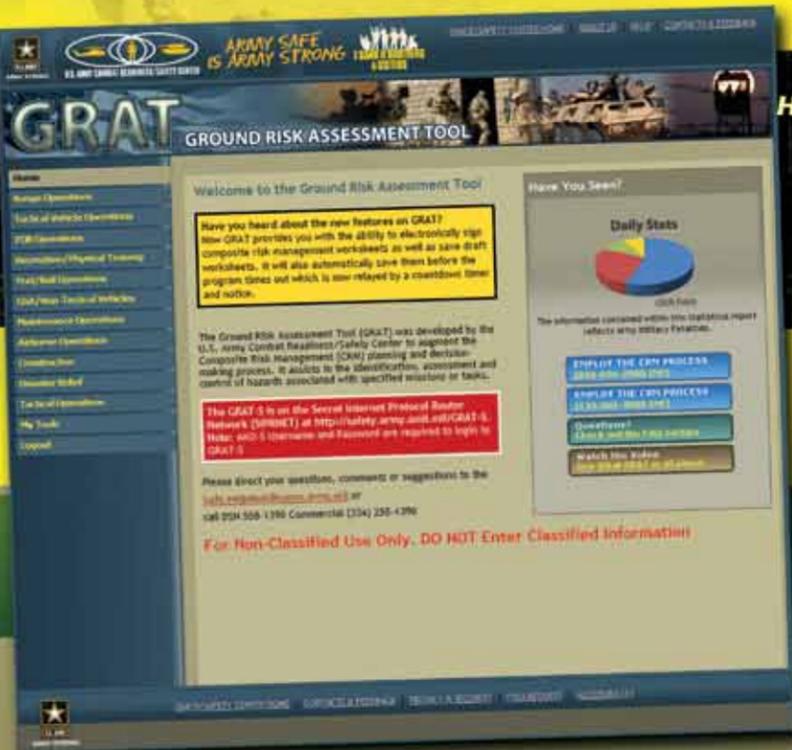


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CIVILIANS FAMILIES

## THIS MONTH CONTENTS

- 4 From the CSM
- 14 Done Too Soon
- 16 Finishing in a 'Pinch'
- 18 Crew Coordination Saves the Day
- 22 Better Safe than Sorry

- 28 No Lip Service
- 30 A Science Experiment Gone Bad
- 32 Pork Rind Pandemonium
- 34 Warm Weather Hazards Approaching
- 36 How to Use Your Safety Officer
- 44 Accident Briefs

## SAFETY FEATURES



## FROM THE COVER



MEDIA  
RESOURCES  
Posters

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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](mailto:safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil).

Knowledge is published monthly by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, Bldg. 4905, 5th Ave., Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363. Address questions regarding content to the managing editor at (334) 255-2287. To submit an article for publication, email [safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil](mailto:safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil) or fax (334) 255-9044. We reserve the right to edit all manuscripts. Address questions concerning distribution to (334) 255-2062. Visit our website at <https://safety.army.mil>.

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“ Don't be **AFRAID** to **CORRECT** your **PEERS** or **EVEN** those **ABOVE YOU** in the **CHAIN** of command and **TALK** to your **SENIORS** when a fellow Leader is in **TROUBLE.** ”



# JUST THE FACTS

**One of the things I look forward to most in my job is traveling to talk with Leaders and Soldiers across our Army. It's great to see firsthand the tremendous job our Soldiers are doing every day, while also helping Leaders at all levels address the safety challenges within their formations. But there's one thing about these conversations that sticks with me after every trip: Almost without fail, they focus on the issue of indiscipline and seat belt use in privately owned vehicles.**

During all my years as an NCO, I've heard every excuse imaginable from Soldiers who willingly choose not to wear their seat belts. Here are a few of them, followed by some facts on why buckling up is so important.

*"Sergeant Major, I have an air bag, so I don't need to wear my seat belt."* FACT: Air bags only supplement the protective effects of seat belts — they do not replace them. Driver and passenger air bags, as well as new iterations of curtain and side impact bags, are not designed to be used alone. In fact, unbelted vehicle occupants can be seriously injured or killed by the force of activated air bags, which deploy at speeds greater than 100 mph.

*"Well, Sergeant Major, I drive a truck, so I'm safe. It sits so high no car can hurt me."* FACT: This excuse is apparently pretty popular, since National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics show seat belt use by pickup truck drivers lags significantly behind those in other vehicles, including passenger cars, SUVs and minivans (75 percent versus 86 and 88 percent, respectively). But in reality, pickups are three times more likely to roll during crashes than other vehicles, and rollovers are the single-greatest cause of injuries and fatalities on American roadways each year.

*"But Sergeant Major, I only need my seat belt when I'm driving long*

*distances. I'm just going a few miles around post now."* FACT: According to the state of Florida's Click It or Ticket campaign, most fatal vehicle accidents occur within 25 miles of home and at speeds below 40 mph. Whatever speed you're traveling is the speed at which your body, led by your head, will hit the windshield or dash should you be involved in an accident unbelted. For every 10 mph in a traffic accident, crash forces are roughly equivalent to the fall from a one-story building — and your head won't know the difference between glass, plastic or asphalt.

*"You know, Sergeant Major, I'm a safe driver, so I don't need a seat belt."* FACT: Not everyone takes

pride in their driving. Bad drivers are everywhere, and bad things happen to good drivers. You also can't control the weather, mechanical malfunctions or events like tire blowouts, either on your vehicle or someone else's. You don't want to be remembered as that "safe" driver who died because you failed to buckle up.

And last but not least ...

*"Uh, Sergeant Major, I just forgot to put my seat belt on."* FACT: It takes about three seconds to buckle a seat belt, states the U.S. Department of Transportation. If you can remember to grab your cellphone or music player before hitting the road, you have both the time and the memory to reach back for your belt and snap it into place. Make it a priority, and you'll be surprised how quickly buckling up becomes an automatic habit.

Still not convinced? Here are two more cold, hard facts for you. First, Soldiers are required by regulation to wear seat belts at all

times in POVs, whether as a driver or passenger. It's not a choice, and it doesn't matter whether the state in which they live has a seat belt law. Second, enforcing standards saves lives and engaged leadership works. Driving is a privilege, not a right, and as Leaders, we have the power of both corrective action and corrective training through programs like Roadrageous to steer high-risk Soldiers back to a safe path. Use that power wisely and every time it's needed. We can't risk losing even one of our Soldiers because we didn't take the time to make an on-the-spot correction or have a conversation on indiscipline behind the wheel.

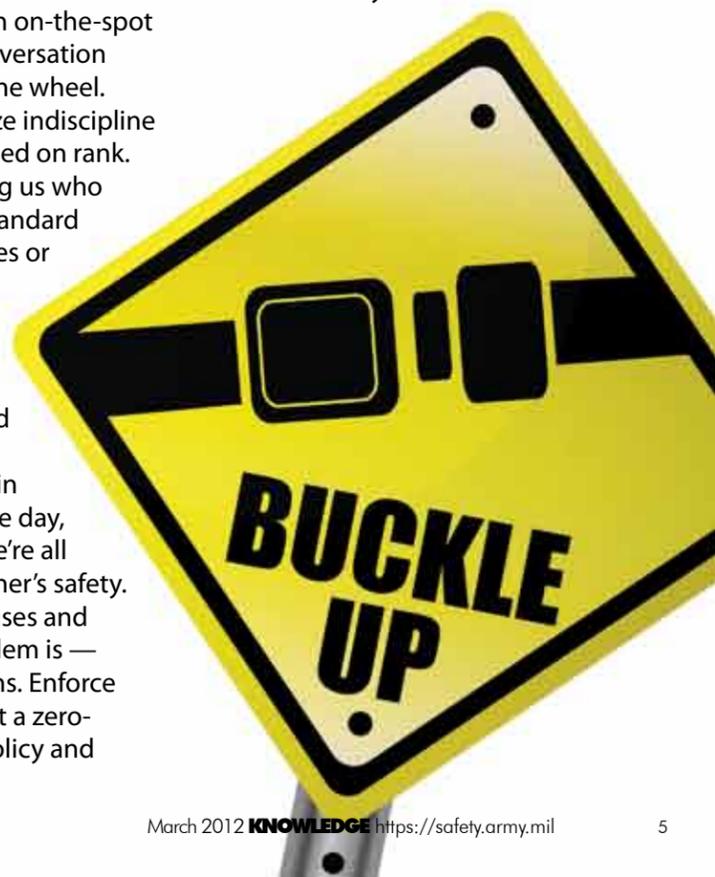
We also have to realize indiscipline doesn't discriminate based on rank. There are Leaders among us who willfully disregard the standard every day in their vehicles or on their motorcycles. Don't be afraid to correct your peers or even those above you in the chain of command and talk to your seniors when a fellow Leader is in trouble. At the end of the day, we're all Soldiers, and we're all accountable for each other's safety.

We've heard the excuses and we know what the problem is — now it's time for solutions. Enforce the standard, implement a zero-tolerance indiscipline policy and

engage with your Soldiers on the seat belt issue. There's nothing more important to our Soldiers, Family members and Civilians than safety, and that begins with you.

**Army Safe is Army Strong!**

**RICK STIDLEY**  
Command Sergeant Major  
U.S. Army Combat  
Readiness/Safety Center



# Mercury Rising

PHILLIP GARRETT, TIMOTHY BUSHMAN, TYSON GRIER, KEITH HAURET  
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**W**ith summer approaching and temperatures rising, there is a natural tendency to worry about heat injuries. But another equal concern is the increase in musculoskeletal injuries due to more vigorous outdoor summer activities. Winter conditioning does not necessarily translate to being conditioned for your summer activities. This creates the need to physically train the body for warm-weather activities.

Without taking precautions before engaging in new sports, exercise and recreational activities, you may be more susceptible to physical injury. Such factors as reduced overall physical activity (not including physical training), an unbalanced diet (and maybe a few extra pounds), holiday leave and fewer recreational opportunities during the winter may all contribute to an increased risk for injury.

According to a recent Status of Forces Survey of active-duty Soldiers,

more than half of all Soldiers (59 percent) get injured each year. Almost 30 percent of Soldiers had an injury from sports, exercise and recreational activities. Half of these injuries were from running and about two-thirds were lower body injuries. The most common injuries experienced from these activities were sprained joints, strained muscles, tendonitis or bursitis, fractures, and joint dislocations or separations. Because of injuries such as these, nearly 40 percent of the injured Soldiers were placed on limited duty for 15 or more days. Though many injuries are caused by trauma (such as falling or colliding with another player), many more injuries are caused by overuse or overtraining. With PT and sports-related injuries playing such a big role in the Army, it is important to take certain steps to help prevent these injuries from occurring.

Tips to help prevent sports and PT injuries for individual and group activities include:

- Wear running shoes that fit comfortably and replace them after 300 to 500 miles.
- Run on stable ground; avoid gravel, loose dirt and potholes.
- Wear sports attire that helps to keep the body cool, such as moisture-wicking fabrics that allow sweat to quickly evaporate through your clothing.
- Wear an ankle or knee support/brace if you are susceptible to ankle rolls or knee injuries.
- Remove any jewelry that could get caught in quick movements.
- Wear shoes that are appropriate for the activity, such as cleats, to avoid slips, trips or falls.
- Wear sports-specific padding and equipment (helmets, protective eyewear, etc.).
- Communicate with team members to avoid collisions.
- When possible, always wear a mouth guard (basketball, soccer,

- football, martial arts/combatives).
- Ensure equipment is maintained and perform safety checks.
- Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when in open water.

Before any physical activity, always remember to warm up for 5 to 10 minutes with light cardiovascular work and exercises that simulate the movements you will perform in your activity. It is also important to cool down and continue to hydrate your body with water or a carbohydrate sports drink at the end of any exercise. One way to monitor fluid loss and replacement needs is to record your weight before and after workouts. In conditions of 85 F and 40 percent humidity, athletes will

When exercising, an additional 1 to 2 liters should be consumed for endurance bouts lasting over an hour. It is also important to replenish carbohydrates and protein (a 3:1 ratio is recommended, in which you consume three carbohydrate grams for every single gram of protein) used during exercise and recreational activities within 30 minutes of ending the activity.

If you experience a serious injury (such as a concussion, fracture or dislocated joint) from PT or sporting activities, seek medical treatment and inform unit leadership if you are given limited duty restrictions. For a minor injury (sprain, strain, abrasion or bruise), always report the injury and remember the acronym RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression,

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Rising temperatures and summer weather present persistent challenges for Soldiers and Civilians operating in theater and at home. The Army team must remain watchful of the increased hazards associated with spring and summer activities and stay engaged throughout this high-risk season. Visit our safety multimedia page, <https://safety.army.mil/multimedia/>, to check out our heat injury prevention video and other resources conveniently available to all Leaders, Soldiers, Family members and Civilians.**

lose about 2 to 4 pounds of body weight per hour through sweat loss. Regardless of activity, Soldiers participating in recreational sports will lose a significant amount of water through sweat. The aim of athletes should be to replenish water levels lost from exercise and physical activity. Keep in mind that by the time an athlete experiences thirst, a significant amount of body fluid has already been lost and dehydration has set in. The Institute of Medicine recommends 3.7 liters of water per day for men and 2.7 liters for women.

Elevation). You must rest to give the injury time to heal, which could take several days or weeks, depending on the severity of the injury. Use ice (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off for four to six hours) to reduce swelling of the affected area and decrease the pain. Compression bandages will help to stabilize the joint and elevating the affected area will also help reduce swelling. If pain and swelling persists, seek medical treatment.◀

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# Commit to the Gauges

**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 ALEX DROUIN**  
C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment  
Fort Campbell, Ky.

**A**ir Force weather has a history of being wrong, and tonight was no exception. We were briefed to expect a 4,000-foot ceiling with visibility of four to seven miles — in other words, a beautiful night. We were flying a UH-60A medevac aircraft, and our plan was to depart Lexington, Ky., and airport hop to the outer edge of Nashville’s Class C airspace before heading back west to Fort Campbell. Little did we know what was in store for us.

Prior to departure, I called the weather folks to get an update and brief time. They told me there were no changes to the weather and for us to have a safe flight. Departing to the south was uneventful and actually pleasant. The atmosphere in the cockpit was relaxed, with everyone enjoying a smooth night vision goggle flight home. Our GPS had broken on the way to Lexington, so our primary means of navigation was the Mark 2 eyeball and map. As a backup, we had plugged in the electronic data management kneeboard.

Halfway to Nashville, the ceilings

started to drop and I found myself closed in by a layer of fog and rain. Initially puzzled, I did what most aviators do and descended to stay below the cloud layer. The radar altimeter initially read 1,000 feet above ground level, then 700, 500 and finally 400. We entered the hilly area between the cities of Lexington and Nashville and, more importantly, a weather cell our forecasters weren’t tracking. Within an instant, I found myself with two choices: descend farther and break right to follow a sucker hole, or commit to instruments and start my climb. Knowing that a descending turn

in near instrument meteorological conditions would most likely result in a very bad situation, I pulled in power and started to climb. The whole process happened so fast that my pilot had no idea we were climbing until I calmly asked that he enter 7700 into the transponder.

We practice encountering inadvertent IMC with every annual proficiency and readiness test, so the initial entry was a non-event, but then what? I had practiced what to do while in Fort Campbell’s airspace, but I was in the middle of nowhere without a GPS to tell me where we were. I then asked the PI to take the

“Halfway to Nashville, the **CEILING** **STARTED** to **DROP** and I found myself **CLOSED** in by a **LAYER OF FOG** and **RAIN.**”

controls so I could figure the next step. We never practiced what to do when IIMC and in the middle of farm country!

Thinking back, I remembered an instructor pilot once told me about always having an en route low-altitude map for these types of situations. I grabbed mine and then realized we still had an operational EDM. With the aid of the EDM, I figured we were 15 miles south of the New Hope VHF omnidirectional range, and the ELA told me that Indy Center was the controlling agency. After contacting Indy and picking up an instrument flight rules clearance, we continued west under radar vectors to Fort Campbell. The weather broke about 20 minutes later with at least seven miles visibility and 4,000-foot ceilings, just as weather had told us. With the bad weather behind us, we canceled IFR and continued with our training on the reservation, just thankful to be home.

**Lessons Learned**

Don't be afraid to commit to IIMC. Breaking right and descending may have seemed like a viable option, but that would have been the most dangerous choice for the crew.

The first rule of business is to commit to the gauges, specifically the attitude indicator, and climb. Get away from the ground. All too often, we read accident reports stating that the crew decided to make a 180-degree turn instead of just committing to the instruments. Your life, as well as the lives of the crew, depends on the pilot in command, or the PI, being comfortable with immediately committing to IIMC. Just fly the aircraft. Our bodies are fantastic at lying to us about our movement in space. We call this spatial disorientation, and anyone with more than a day of flying has experienced this in some way. With clouds obscuring the horizon and only a few lights to work with, the descending

turn would have been a prime condition to experience "spatial D."

Finally, always be prepared with the right publications. As professional aviators, Army pilots should always have current aircraft pubs with them no matter the training situation. Weather has been known to be wrong in the past, and just because you did not intend to fly in the clouds doesn't mean it can't happen. Know what to do and how to do it when things fall apart. We practice emergency procedures all the time, but do we ever practice IIMC procedures? Next time you are on a cross-country visual flight rules flight and in the middle of nowhere, ask yourself, "If I were to go IIMC right now, what would I do?" Be prepared. It may take you a few minutes to find the answer in the pub.◀◀

**“ WEATHER has been known to be WRONG IN THE PAST, and just because you did not intend to fly in the clouds DOESN'T MEAN it can't HAPPEN. ”**

LEADERS, SOLDIERS, CIVILIANS AND FAMILIES:  
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# Done Too Soon

**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 JOSHUA MAILLARD**  
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 St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

**T**he few lights near the road flashed by on either side of Staff Sgt. Harold Myers as he accelerated on his Suzuki Hayabusa. He could hardly imagine what the nearly 200 horsepower of his first motorcycle could do. Nor could he imagine what was about to happen to him.

This story takes place on the little island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Myers, well liked among his peers in the 661st Military Police Company, was an easygoing, laid-back individual. He'd just come from a deployment in Iraq — his second deployment in four years. A U.S. marshal in the civilian job he'd held for many years, he was slated for

another deployment — this one to Kosovo. Before deploying again, he decided to buy his first motorcycle. The Hayabusa was said to be the world's fastest bike, which seemed a bit much for a first-time rider.

He'd had the bike about two months when he was on his way home from work, riding toward

the island's west side. Speeding on a poorly lit section of highway, he lost control and crashed into a guardrail. Although he was taken to a hospital, he later died there. So what went wrong?

There were a number of factors, some obvious and some less so, that contributed to Myers' death. For example, he chose a Hayabusa,

a powerful sport bike that would have taxed the skills of a highly experienced rider, let alone one without any type of training. Maybe after his two deployments he was feeling invincible and that attitude got the best of him. Maybe that was the unseen, underlying factor that led him to be undisciplined when riding. Whatever the reason, he ignored getting the motorcycle training required by the Army — training that might have revealed his need to carefully develop his riding skills. Undisciplined, he violated the speed limit, even though he, as a law enforcement officer, clearly knew it was both wrong and dangerous. Although he made the right choice in wearing a helmet, it was not enough to save his life. Personal protective equipment is not a silver bullet that can protect riders from the consequences of every bad choice. Speed, alone, doesn't necessarily kill; however, speeding in the wrong places all too often does.

There was speculation he was having a lot of personal problems. The week before the accident, he attended a deployment farewell for his best friend, who was leaving for his second tour in Iraq. He'd miss his friend and maybe that weighed heavily on top of the other problems he was having. Looking back, maybe

the command could have paid a little more attention to what was going on in his life before the accident. Had someone taken the time to speak to him about his choice of a Hayabusa as his first motorcycle, maybe he would have listened. Most of all, he needed proper training to give him the riding skills to handle his bike safely. But he didn't get those skills and, without them, mistakes were inevitable. And on a Hayabusa, small mistakes can have big consequences.

So what can be learned from what happened?

As riders, we need to always know our limits and look out for signs in fellow Soldiers that something is wrong. It's important that Soldiers returning from a deployment go through a complete evaluation and have any known or potential problems documented. When we see a Soldier having problems, we have a responsibility to report that to our command and get the

Soldier help. Never take anything for granted. Just because someone looks OK doesn't mean they really are. Most of the time there are warning signs; the key is recognizing them.

Any number of things going on inside Myers' head may have contributed to this accident. Among those could be what motivated him to choose the Hayabusa. Maybe feeling a sense of invincibility overcame his common sense. For a first bike, he could hardly have made a worse choice.

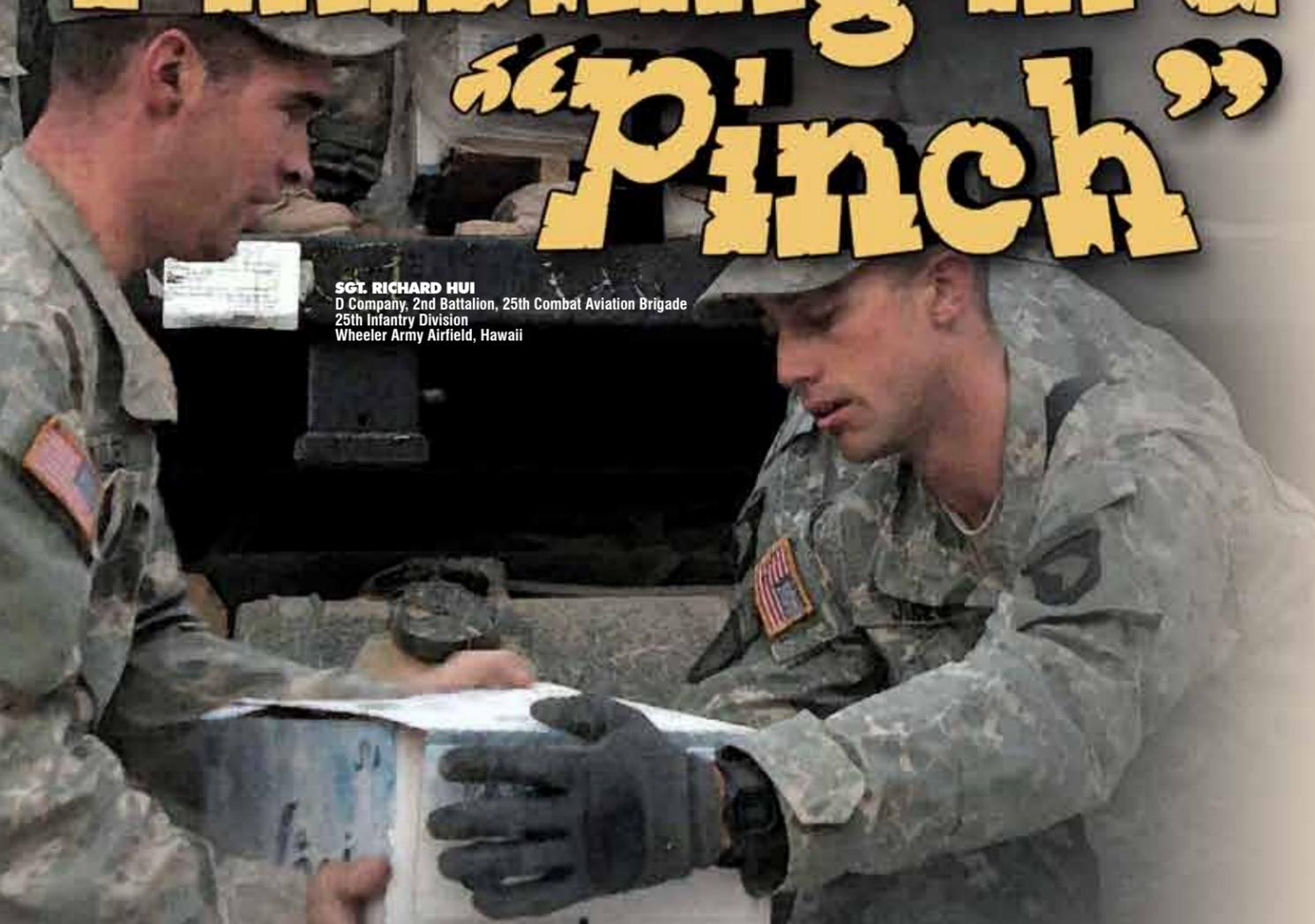
Despite being greatly missed by his friends in his unit, nothing can bring Myers back. But there is something to be learned from his death. If we watch out for one another and spot the warning signs of indiscipline, maybe we can keep a friend's life from being done too soon. Don't leave a fallen comrade behind.◀

“ Personal protective equipment is **NOT A SILVER BULLET** that can **PROTECT** riders from the consequences of every **BAD CHOICE.**”



# Finishing in a "pinch"

**SGT. RICHARD HUI**  
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25th Infantry Division  
Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Ground Risk Assessment Tool can assist during the composite risk management planning and decision-making process. To access GRAT and related accident mitigation tools, visit <https://grat.safety.army.mil>. Carefully identifying, assessing and controlling hazards associated with specified missions and tasks will reduce the probability of accidents happening.

It's amazing how fast a battle buddy can get hurt. Most of us take as many precautions as possible and strive to accomplish all assigned tasks. Occasionally, though, no matter how we go about it, we get caught up in the moment.

As most of us know, the process of packing equipment for a deployment can get hectic. Everything needs to be accounted for, consolidated and shipped out. Trying to coordinate through it all has its difficulties, but, be that as it may, the pre-deployment tasks still need to be completed. Toward the end, we all hope for a little more downtime with our Families and friends before we begin our deployment rotation.

My unit was in full swing with pre-deployment operations. On this particular day, we had to move two tents worth of work stands, trailers and a lot of random ground support equipment about 150 meters from one location to another. Every available body in our company gathered, ready to execute. A simple task and only a short distance to go ... no problem, right?

We positioned some trucks and started piling equipment in the back of them. The operation was very organized and we were moving faster than anticipated. We had a large group of movers loading trucks, drivers moving equipment and receivers arranging the equipment. Battle buddies were on the

fast track, moving all over the place when "it" happened — "That Guy" appeared. You know who That Guy is; he's the one you never want to be.

It was time to move an axle from a disassembled trailer. We were lifting the front axle, wheels, tires and steering bar as we walked out of the tent and toward the back of the truck. Once we set the axle down, we immediately pushed it toward the front of the truck to clear the tailgate. The wheels tilted and, at that moment, That

upper body and shoulders back and forth trying to get his hands loose, but without success. Someone shouted, "Back up!" and we tilted the axle back so he was able to get free. Luckily, he didn't break any bones and escaped with only minor scratches and bruises.

Even though this incident resulted in only minor injuries, it could have been worse. Looking back now, had the Soldier maintained situational awareness of where he placed his hands,

## FYI

Equipment Training Guides assist operators in becoming more familiar with the safety and operational aspects of their assigned vehicles. To access vehicles and ground equipment training guides, check out our Driver's Training Toolbox at <https://safety.army.mil/drivertrainingtoolbox/>.

Guy was still holding onto the steering strut. Suddenly, he found both of his hands pinched between the steering strut and the axle housing.

He let out a loud, "Ahhhhhhh!" We immediately stopped pushing and watched as he tried to pull both hands free. He frantically swung his head,

this accident could have been prevented. My advice to fellow Soldiers is when assigned a task, try not to over-think it — even a task as simple as moving equipment from one spot to another.◀

# CREW COORDINATION

## *Saves the Day*

**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5 KEVIN M. PURTEE**  
 Joint Forces Headquarters  
 Texas Army National Guard  
 Austin, Texas



I was in an AH-64 battalion, and we were at gunnery. The mission was to move an aircraft from the rearm pads to a holding area — a simple 30-second flight. My stick buddy was in the front seat and flying the aircraft as we departed from the rearm pads and headed for the holding area — a long, narrow open spot in the trees. The aircraft in the holding area were parked nose to tail, and he set up for an approach between two of the parked aircraft.

As we came down on final, we lost view of the parked aircraft to our front, which is normal in an AH-64. However, I noticed he was shooting the approach to the parked aircraft instead of to the open spot to the aircraft's rear. I asked him, "Do you have the helicopter?" No response. I asked again, "Do you have the helicopter?" Still, no response. I announced, "I have the controls," and executed a go-around. As we came around the second time, I said, "You have the controls." He didn't say anything.

Instead, he held up his hands to indicate I should keep flying.

It was strange that he wouldn't talk to me. I thought that perhaps he was mad. When we landed, I asked if he could hear me. He gave me a thumbs-up. I asked if he could talk. He gave me a thumbs-down. His microphone had failed.

In the span of about five seconds, our routine, 30-second flight had almost become a major accident. We could have destroyed two expensive

helicopters, injured or killed ourselves and injured or killed a crew chief who was working on the parked helicopter. Instead, we salvaged the situation.

### **Crew Coordination Techniques Worked**

The crew coordination techniques we had learned in previous training saved the day. Specifically, we used our crew briefing, standard cockpit operating procedures and the two-challenge rule. We also managed to avoid problems

with complacency and excessive professional courtesy.

My stick buddy and I had both been flying Apaches for a while. He was an instructor pilot and was the pilot in command on the flight. I believe he's a great pilot and, admittedly, there's a tendency on my part to trust him a lot more than I would a less-experienced or skilled pilot. In other words, it would have been

easy for me to be complacent. Fortunately, that didn't happen. I was paying attention and reacted accordingly.

Less-experienced aviators might be reluctant to question an IP or a senior-ranking person. This is the problem with excessive professional courtesy. My stick buddy and I are peers, so it was really not an issue in this case.

Additionally, during our crew briefings, he made it clear that we should speak up if anything made us uncomfortable.

Standard cockpit operating procedures were helpful because when his microphone failed, I knew immediately we weren't doing things the way we normally did. The simple fact that we weren't following our normal procedures indicated to me there

was something wrong — although I had no idea what it was until later.

The most beneficial technique we used that day was the two-challenge rule. If you ask the other crewmember about something twice and he or she doesn't respond, you take the controls. This guards against subtle incapacitation of the other crewmember and, more practically, keeps you from hitting things. We briefed the two-challenge rule thoroughly when we started flying together. It's simple, but it worked as advertised. In this case, I asked him twice if he saw the helicopter. When he didn't respond, I took the controls.

Fortunately, we were able to apply some of the things we had learned about crew coordination to help us operate effectively as a crew and prevent a disaster. We also relearned the lesson that there are no routine flights, even for experienced crews.

*Author's note: I wrote this article many years ago. Many flight hours later, I realize there was one powerful tool we should have used. The Apache is equipped with night vision systems attached to the nose of the helicopter and available to both crewmembers. The layout allows the crew to see forward and down "through" the structure of*

*the helicopter. The system works quite well during the day. With the limited forward visibility inherent in the helicopter, it is foolish for the crew not to have the NVS ready for immediate use, particularly when going into an area like the one described in the article. In fact, when briefing new aviators, I tell them they can identify from the ground when a less-experienced crew is approaching for a landing — the NVS is stowed. If my friend and I had used the NVS that day in Germany, we would not have almost landed on top of a crew chief working on a parked helicopter.◀*

**THE** most **BENEFICIAL** technique we **USED** that day was the **TWO-CHALLENGE** rule. If you **ASK** the other **CREWMEMBER** about something **TWICE** and he or she **DOESN'T** respond, **YOU** take the **CONTROLS.**

Get the tools and information necessary to be an engaged Leader

# Leader's CORNER

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# Better Safe than Sorry

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U.S. Army Reserve  
Conroe, Texas

**W**hen I woke up that morning, I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be out of work for a couple of weeks by day's end. I went through my usual morning ritual and headed off to my part-time job. I was working in property management, and part of my responsibility was to survey a nine-acre storage facility to see if there had been any theft or damage during the previous night.

To do this, I had a golf cart to drive around the property. Today was a good day so far; my wife even offered to drive the cart for me. Always happy to have her assistance, I took her up on the offer. Everything was going just fine until I got bored. We all know boredom is often what starts us on the road to impetuous activities. According to personal development pioneer and radio legend Earl Nightingale, "You'll find boredom where there is the absence of a good idea." That's exactly what my next thought was not ... a good idea.

I decided I should try some golf cart surfing, at least that's what I called it. The objective was for me to hang off the side of the golf cart, trying to get it to come up on two wheels as my wife drove. She, of course, told me that was not a good idea. I, being a very hardheaded individual, decided to surf anyway. There was one thing, however, I didn't take into account — potholes.

Thanks to me distracting her, she accidentally hit — most likely — the only pothole on the property, which caused my foot to slip off the side of the cart. When my foot hit the ground, the tire sucked me under the cart. I was stunned; my wife had just run over me! I rolled out from under the cart with two cracked ribs and a bruised hip. The entire left side of my body was black and blue. Still, I know the situation could've been worse. It's a small miracle I didn't receive internal injuries.

I learned some important lessons that day. If you're going to do something dangerous, first stop, determine and weigh all the hazards involved and their consequences. Second, if you determine the activity is worth taking a risk, make a plan for what you're going to do, then develop controls to reduce the risks. After that, figure out a way to put those methods into action. Lastly, stick to your plan and follow the methods you devised to reduce the risks. In retrospect, composite risk management is not just for military activities. It's a good process to implement in all areas of your life.

You've heard all the clichés — "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," "Safety doesn't happen by accident" or "Better a thousand times careful than once dead." I know these sayings are well worn, but the premise behind them is very sound; it is better to be safe than sorry.

Take a moment to think because that instant of thoughtlessness could be the last of your life. Just remember, you don't have to give up fun activities or even those that other people might consider insane. If you wish to participate in those extreme activities, just do so in a well-thought-out manner. Always make safety your primary concern. Those little moments can change your life forever. I was fortunate that this one only changed mine for a couple of weeks. «

“ **IN RETROSPECT, composite risk management IS NOT JUST FOR military activities. It's a good process to implement in ALL AREAS of your life.** ”



**If you don't have a Motorcycle Mentorship Program supported by senior Leaders, then maybe you don't have one at all.**

# Got Leaders?

**SGT. MICHAEL R. BENNETT**  
B Company, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment  
Schofield Barracks, Hawaii

Five years ago, I was just another motorcycle rider in a typical Army unit. Back then, the only motorcycle training available for my unit was the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced *RiderCourse*. If you were new to riding and didn't have at least \$250 to fork over for a beginner's course, your motorcycle education was relegated to barracks hearsay and listening to your

friends' near-death experiences. Soldiers who wanted to try out riding waited for the weekends and rode bikes they'd purchased and hidden off post or borrowed from their friends. Too often they'd mix in dangerous ingredients like speed, lack of personal protective equipment and alcohol.

From top to bottom, the command turned a blind eye to this type of behavior. Their response was to have Soldiers sign a document saying if they died in a motorcycle crash and weren't licensed, trained or wearing their PPE, their Families would lose their survivor benefits. Most took that with a grain of salt — just another threat rolling downhill.

As new Soldiers rotated in, more and more bikes began showing up in the barracks parking lot. Four bikes turned into 20 in the blink of an eye. Most riders had a good deal of experience and wore custom leather jackets or one-piece suits. Everything seemed to be on the level. They had post decals and PPE, so I assumed they were in compliance with the post's standards.

As the weeks passed, I noticed the "days since the last fatality"

sign never made it much past 30. I wondered why so many "Joes" were losing their lives. I wasn't the only one who was concerned. My unit had recently transitioned from a company into a new battalion. Our new battalion commander let it be known that he wasn't going to allow his Soldiers to become statistics. We'd all heard this before and figured it meant more painful procedures and paperwork. You know, "Inspect the Soldiers twice as much — that will cut the problems in half." I guess that's a theory they teach at West Point.

Our new commander called for a meeting of all motorcycle riders and any Soldiers interested in riding. We were to gather at the crack of dawn Friday morning at the post theater. Any Soldier who had a bike was ordered to bring it. That's when the rumors began to fly. One of the more ridiculous ones claimed that the new commander would "outlaw" motorcycles. Another rumor was he would have the MPs inspect every bike and, if any failed, the Soldier would be ticketed and forced to pay to have it hauled away. I didn't believe these rumors, but after you hear something so many times, you have

to wonder if there isn't some truth involved. It was starting to get to me.

Friday finally came and I was sitting outside the theater with hundreds of other riders, all just as curious as I was. After a little while, I heard a single bike coming up the road and looked to see if I knew who it was. As the bike approached, I saw it was our new battalion commander. He had a nice anniversary edition Harley-Davidson Road King. It was weird because I never pictured him as a rider. After he came to a stop, he announced his reason for gathering everyone together and what the day's activities would be. He, along with other senior Leaders, would inspect the bikes and check riders' insurance and PPE to make sure everyone was "doing the right thing." After that, we would have some classes on motorcycle safety and maintenance and then there would be a prize

given away. The final activity was a group ride to a local lake, where he released us for the weekend.

I have to admit I was shocked. This was the first time anyone higher than the first sergeant had showed an interest in the unit's riders. Rather than making threats, the battalion commander showed he had an interest in common with his Soldiers and used that as an opportunity to get to know them. He was willing to both do the right thing and show us what the right thing was. These meetings became a monthly ritual that made riding rewarding rather than punishing Soldiers who rode. Before long, our monthly motorcycle days

caught on like a wildfire throughout the brigade and several local bike shops jumped in as sponsors.

After a while, I noticed guys out in the parking lot saying things like, "Take a class before you get on your bike" or "Take it easy, ride your ride." Something fundamental had changed in their mindset. Motorcycle training days were seen as a sign of respect rather than punishment, and no one wanted to mess that up.

Although the post sign rarely made it past the 30-day mark without a fatality, those fatalities no longer represented riders in our brigade. Our Leader had kept his word. He made sure we were Soldiers — not statistics.◀◀

## GOT MENTORSHIP?

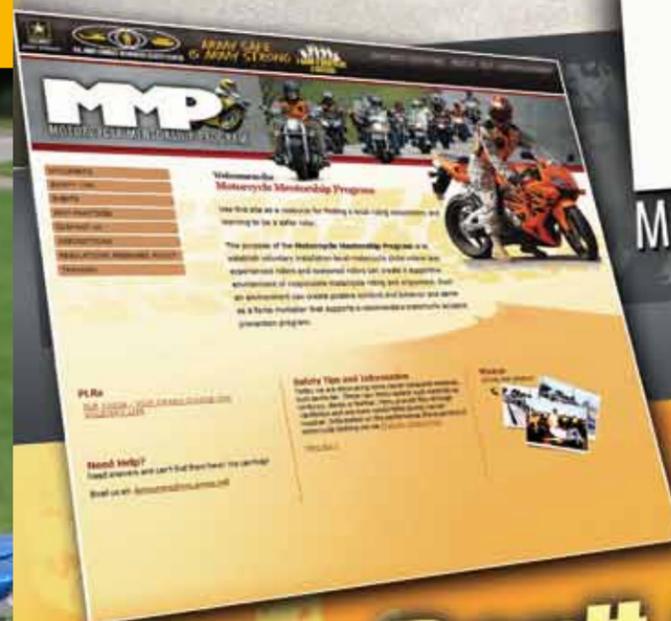
Units around the Army are finding the Motorcycle Mentorship Program a useful tool for keeping Soldiers from becoming statistics. For more information on the MMP, check out <https://safety.army.mil/MMP/>.



# MMP

MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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



**Don't ride alone.  
Mentor a battle buddy!**

# NO LIP SERVICE

**SCOTTY JOHNSON**  
Aviation Branch Safety Office  
U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence  
Fort Rucker, Ala.

**S**ome crewmembers aren't taking the time to brief their passengers in accordance with their aircraft checklist. And some are only giving the passenger brief "lip service," or just going through the motions. Are these fair statements? Before you shoot the messenger, first look at how your unit is doing business. Are you taking the time to complete the required brief? Do you cut the brief short because of time? You've flown this VIP before, so one brief is enough, right? Wrong! What if the aide to the VIP says he is too busy to be bothered? What other excuses have you accepted or made in the past?

Ask your unit to conduct a random survey of passengers flown to see what kind of briefing they received. You may be surprised at what they tell you. Aircraft crewmembers know what to do when they get into their aircraft — where to step and not step, what to touch and not touch, when and how to buckle and unbuckle their restraint system, the location of fire extinguishers and survival kits and how to use them. However, it's just as critical that passengers, whether they are civilian or military, also know these things.

Remember, passengers aren't as familiar with the routine or emergency procedures that are second nature to aircrews. Don't ever assume they know about your aircraft simply because they are wearing a uniform and maybe even aviator wings. Your passengers don't know what they don't know. This could lead to serious accidents and injury.

Every pilot in command, as well as each crewmember, is required to ensure all passengers, military and civilian alike, are briefed on emergency actions prior to flight in accordance with their aircraft operator's manual. Here are some general suggestions that can apply to just about any aircraft passenger briefing.

- **Flight data.** Brief passengers on the intended route, altitude, time en route and weather.
- **Approaching and departing the aircraft.** Explain the proper direction to approach and depart the aircraft to avoid rotor blades, propellers and exhaust heat. Also, go over proper entry and exit procedures.
- **Seating.** When passengers occupy seats in the area of aircraft controls, caution them against unintentional or inadvertent interference with the controls,

both during flight and when entering or leaving the aircraft.

- **Smoking.** Remind passengers that smoking is prohibited on board or within 50 feet of any aircraft.
- **Emergency entrances, exits and equipment.** Identify their location and demonstrate operation of jettisonable doors and windows, escape hatches, cabin doors, cargo ramps, cutout/kickout panels, first aid kits, troop alarms, jump lights and emergency escape equipment (axes, etc.).
- **Safety belts and shoulder harnesses.** Make sure passengers are familiar with the use and operation of this equipment and the requirement to use it.
- **Helmets.** If passengers are provided helmets, remind them to keep the chinstrap secured and the nape strap tight.
- **Overwater flight.** If the flight will be conducted over water, familiarize passengers with flotation equipment, the location and general use of all life-support equipment and methods of emergency egress in water.
- **Survival equipment.** Point out its location and explain general use of survival equipment such as flares, rafts, radios, etc.
- **Fire extinguishers.** Point out their location and explain how to use fire extinguishers, with special emphasis on occupant safety (people first, equipment last).
- **Clothing.** Brief passengers to roll down shirtsleeves during the entire flight. Be sure that all passengers without helmets wear earplugs or other hearing protection.
- **Protective masks.** If carrying toxic chemicals onto the aircraft, make sure all passengers have protective masks readily available.

- **Refueling.** Ensure passengers offload and remain at least 50 feet from the aircraft during refueling.
- **Equipment security.** Caution passengers not to throw anything from the aircraft at any time, in flight or on the ground. In addition, remind them to secure all equipment inside the aircraft to prevent it from becoming a missile in the cabin during a crash, and outside the aircraft to prevent it from being sucked into rotor systems, engine intakes or blown into people or equipment.
- **Emergency landing position.** Explain and demonstrate proper body position: Bend forward at the waist with feet planted firmly on the floor. Rest chest on knees and hold the position by enfolding and locking arms around and behind thighs.
- **Off-loading.** Instruct passengers that under normal conditions they should wait until they receive a word or signal from a crewmember. In an emergency, they should offload and move away from the aircraft to a pre-briefed position. (During a fire, egress should be immediate; no fire, wait until the blades stop turning.)

There is no excuse for cutting short, amending or omitting the passenger brief; your operator's manual requires it. After an accident, it would be tragic to have someone be unable to free themselves from your aircraft because you didn't brief them on how to use the emergency exits. What if they didn't know how to get you out, use the fire extinguisher to fight a fire or use your survival radio to get help? Conduct proper passenger briefs each and every time! Just do it!◀



# A Science Experiment GONE BAD

**JAMES JACKSON**  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Savannah, Ga.

**M**y wife and I had always dreamed of the day we'd own a home with a white picket fence, two-car garage and backyard. When our dream became a reality, we were ecstatic and invited friends, neighbors and Family to our humble abode. As we settled into our new home, time flew by. I guess my wife and I both hit a plateau at the same time with work and getting into the routine of life. So it was a shock to us when we received a call from relatives wanting to come for a visit.

They wanted to see our house and stay over for a visit. We were happy they were coming to visit because we hadn't seen them in a long time. As we prepared for our company, we started to get the house ready. After I mowed the lawn and attended to other areas, my wife and I were sure our relatives would be impressed with the house and our handiwork. We agreed to call it a night and decided to finish the last bit of work left indoors early the next morning.

With sunrise, we began cleaning the common areas. We were feeling proud of ourselves until we got to the guest areas. The guest bedroom and bathroom had not been touched in more than three months! The areas were filthy. This was definitely not the impression we wanted to leave on anyone, especially our relatives.

In haste, we decided to attack the two rooms with every cleaning agent we had — toilet bowl cleaner, bleach, Comet, ammonia and more bleach. This area was going to be "Spic and Span" clean! Everything was going well when we got the call — our guests were less than an hour out and we'd just started cleaning their bathroom. At this point, I decided to throw a combination of cleaning solutions into the bathtub and then run some hot water in it. I stayed in the bathroom while my wife finished vacuuming the hallway. After about five minutes, I began experiencing a headache, and the back of my throat started to burn. On top of that, my eyes were now watering like a leaky faucet. When my wife opened the bathroom door and saw me, she suggested I get some fresh air.

By the time our guests arrived, I was still suffering from something (I wasn't sure what the heck was going on at this point), and they asked if I had a cold. I told them "no" and didn't think anything more of my condition until one of our guests came back from the bathroom hacking and coughing. Immediately I suggested we move outdoors to get some fresh air.

As we moved outside, they asked if we had used any chemicals with chlorine and ammonia in the bathroom recently. I looked at them as though they had asked me to explain quantum mechanics. They went on to explain that when you mix ammonia and chlorine (ingredients found in common household cleaning supplies), you get a gas previously used as a weapon in World War I! Both my wife and I were astonished and mortified we had created something so sinister. They also went on to say that every year individuals die from this toxic concoction. Once we'd uncovered the problem, we aired out the house and rinsed the tub and sink again. We then ended up having a great visit with our relatives.

To prevent a similar incident from happening in the future, we now take extra time and look at the ingredients of the cleaning agents we use. I strongly recommend you do the same. Trust me — you don't want to unknowingly create a chemical weapon in your own bathroom.◀

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org>, cleaning products are near the top of the list of the most common poisons for children and adults. Corrosive cleaners such as drain openers, oven cleaners, toilet bowl cleaner and rust removers are some of the more dangerous types of poisons found in homes.

When handling household and chemical products, the AAPCC offers the following tips to keep you and your loved ones safe:

- Keep potential poisons in their original containers.
- Do not use food containers such as cups or bottles to store household and chemical products.
- Store food and household and chemical products in separate areas. Mistaking one for the other could cause a serious poisoning.
- Read and follow the directions and caution labels on household and chemical products before using them.
- Never mix household or chemical products together. Mixing chemicals could cause a poisonous gas.
- Turn on fans and open windows when using household and chemical products.
- When spraying household and chemical products, make sure the spray nozzle is directed away from your face and other people.
- Wear protective clothing, including long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, shoes and gloves, when spraying pesticides and other chemicals. Pesticides can be absorbed through the skin and can be extremely poisonous.
- Stay away from areas that have recently been sprayed.
- Don't sniff chemical containers, especially if you don't know what is inside.
- Discard old or outdated household and chemical products. First aid instructions on product containers may be incorrect or outdated.
- Keep the poison center phone number (1-800-222-1222) on or near home phones and programmed into cellphones in case exposure occurs (this number can be called from anywhere in the United States).



**Want to munch on something a little crunchy while you're going down the road? Better take care that you don't bite off more than you can chew.**

It was mid-July, and we had just dropped off my grandsons with their dad in Montgomery, Ala., after a weekend visit. After driving for a while, I became thirsty and decided to get a kidney-splitting 32-ounce soda and something to munch on during the rest of the ride home. While cheddar-flavored popcorn is my favorite bagged snack, it tends to leave a powdery residue on your fingers that can mess up any car's interior. Not wanting to dirty up my Armada, I opted for my second-favorite bagged snack, fried pork rinds.

After paying the cashier at the convenience store, I walked out to my car and prepared my driving area for the proper snack and drink placement. If ever a SUV was designed for "dashboard dining," the Armada has to be it. Just behind the gearshift is a 4- by 7-inch open compartment that makes a great "bag-o-snacks" holder. And the Armada's large drink holders could easily accommodate those oversized sodas. With snacks and drink in place, I was ready to continue the journey home.

As I left the station and started driving on one of many backwoods country roads Alabama is famous for, I dug into my bag of rinds. My mother was sitting in the backseat, enjoying the beautiful, rolling meadows through her window. My wife was playing an electronic card game of solitaire while I was selectively choosing which rind was best for me to eat. You see, I'm not

really keen on the hard, crunchy skins that can crack a tooth. I prefer the light, fluffy rinds that almost dissolve on your tongue.

We'd gone maybe five miles down the road when I selected what I thought was the perfect pigskin. It wasn't too large to eat in one bite and it possessed that light, fluffy texture I enjoyed. As I tossed it in my mouth and bit down, a piece broke off and stuck in the back of my throat, causing me to cough and gag. I immediately reached for my drink to try and wash it down. That didn't work, and I was soon coughing my guts out trying to dislodge the rind. As my coughing got worse, my two "co-drivers" told me to pull over. My gagging was starting to concern them since we were doing 55 mph on a two-lane country road surrounded by ditches on both sides.

Once I finally found an area where I could safely pull off the road, I grabbed my drink and guzzled it in hopes of washing down the offending rind. That didn't work, so I got out of the car, went "bottoms-up" with the soda and "firehosed" the rind until the stuck snack finally gave way. Getting a couple of deep breaths followed by a huge sigh of relief, I returned to the driver's seat to listen to the sage wisdom of my two co-drivers. Both suggested I leave the pork rinds alone for the rest of the trip to avoid any repeat performances. Noting their suggestion (and possibility of continuous nagging), I folded

# PORK RIND PANDEMONIUM

**JT COLEMAN**  
Strategic Communication Directorate  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center  
Fort Rucker, Ala.



the bag and assured them I was done eating and driving. Driving down the road, I began wondering about what would have happened had I been choking so badly that I needed someone to do the Heimlich maneuver on me.

Could I have given the internationally recognized "I'm choking" signal (both hands around my throat), exited the roadway safely and gotten help? What if I had been by myself?

At that point, I decided to never eat and drive again. Simply put, eating is just another form of distracted driving just like texting or shaving. Fortunately, I learned a good lesson with relatively minimal consequences. Looking back, my pork rind pandemonium could have proven deadly for my family and others on the road. And no matter how hungry I am, that's something I don't have an appetite for!◀

**A**s colder temperatures fade away for another year, warm weather flying hazards should now be on your checklist of things to worry about. Warmer weather hosts a variety of severe and even violent conditions that can develop rapidly: thunderstorms, hurricanes, tornadoes and their companions — turbulence, wind shear, hail and, most significantly, lightning, the leading hazard associated with thunderstorms.

Before you encounter any of these severe weather phenomena that summer promises, prepare yourself. Brush up on known hazards and how to avoid or minimize the risks.

The weather has no respect for experience or ratings, nor will it manifest sympathy for the inexperienced and unqualified. If you lack training, qualification or adequate preparation,

be prepared to pay the high price severe weather will demand. While the weather may have no respect for your abilities, or the lack thereof, you can respect the hazards associated with severe weather conditions and learn to assess and manage risks accordingly. Never accept a weather risk if there is a control option that would lower that risk.

One of the best protections against inadvertently encountering severe weather in flight is being forewarned of its possible existence or development. A thorough and complete preflight weather briefing is critical. Some operational weather squadrons now have an instrument refresher course online so pilots can brush up on seasonal hazards. However, the pilot's responsibility for avoiding severe

weather does not end with the preflight briefing. It continues with constant in-flight weather observations and careful attention to radio weather advisories along the route. Stay informed, stay alert. Forewarned, you are less likely to run into trouble. Learn to respect nature's often unpredictable and awesome power. Don't let weather hazards spoil your warm-weather flying. Mission First, Safety Always!◀

# WARM WEATHER HAZARDS APPROACHING

**PAULA ALLMAN**  
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U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center  
Fort Rucker, Ala.



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# HOW TO USE YOUR SAFETY OFFICER

**I** was the incoming battalion commander and it had been a wonderful couple of days familiarizing myself with what appeared to be a great unit. After reviewing the brigade commander's Officer Evaluation Report support form in preparation for my initial counseling, I noted the usual comments about meeting or exceeding standards for the commander's unit status report, individual weapons qualification, Army physical fitness test and the unit's successful external evaluation. However, what I hadn't seen before was an objective to "implement and maintain an effective unit safety program supporting unit readiness and combat capability."

During my counseling session with the brigade commander, Col. Green, she asked how I planned to implement and maintain an effective unit safety program. I confidently replied that my safety officer would lead that effort. Not satisfied with my response, she asked me if I knew how to use my safety officer. I said that I would simply ask the safety officer to prepare seasonal and holiday safety messages for me, make appropriate comments at

command/staff meetings, provide last-minute safety tips and keep me abreast of safety-related issues.

That's when Green offered some guidance and mentorship. I learned that my unit had experienced a rash of accidents both on and off duty during the last seven months. One in particular involved a 21-year-old Soldier killed on a motorcycle. The Soldier ran a stop sign and was hit by a car. Another accident involved a Soldier that sustained

a serious back injury while lifting a heavy pelican case. That Soldier spent more than 3 ½ months on convalescent leave and is now pending possible medical retirement.

Green made it clear that unit readiness and combat capability depended on the use of my safety officer and their ability to implement and maintain an effective unit safety program. She said safety was a command team responsibility and informed me that I was required to

attend her safety council meetings and that I needed to link up with her safety officer.

I met with the brigade safety officer and he gave me a lot of valuable information on how to breathe some life back into my safety program. He recommended that my additional duty safety officer serve as a member of my personal staff. He also said that I should appropriately empower the ADSO, allowing him or her to monitor key command

**COL. CHARLES SCHULZE**  
Maryland Army National Guard  
Baltimore, Md.



support programs; observe and participate in unit operations; participate in the military decision making process; manage the unit safety program; document and track hazards, action officers and suspense dates; and handle accident reporting and trend analysis.

Armed with ideas and guidance, I met with my command team several times and we developed a plan on how to set up and effectively manage a unit safety program. I appointed a new ADSO, Capt. Johnson, and assistant ADSO, Sgt. 1st Class Stevenson. I briefed them on my expectations and, heeding the brigade safety officer's advice, I let them know they'd serve on my personal staff, reporting directly to me.

Four months later, my unit experienced one Class C, two Class D accidents and some close-call events that could have easily resulted in a serious injury or fatality. This definitely wasn't the precedence on safety I wanted to set.

Soon after, the ADSO and assistant ADSO returned from the Ground Safety Officer course with fresh ideas. Before my next safety council meeting, Johnson and

Stevenson suggested we administer a safety survey. The survey they explained, along with analysis of unit accident trends, would help validate areas where the unit was performing well and expose the areas that needed improvement.

After the unit completed the survey, my executive officer set a date and time for the safety council meeting that happened to conflict with my schedule. I directed the XO to chair the meeting. That's when Johnson met with me and respectfully requested that I chair the meeting. Then I thought about the brigade commander's "implement and maintain an effective unit safety program" performance objective. I chaired the meeting.

My unit was three weeks out from conducting a field training exercise that included live-fire lanes training. Following the FTX and live-fire lanes rehearsal, Johnson and Stevenson emailed me two DA Form 7566 Composite Risk Management worksheets — one for the FTX and the other for live-fire lanes training — for my review and signature.

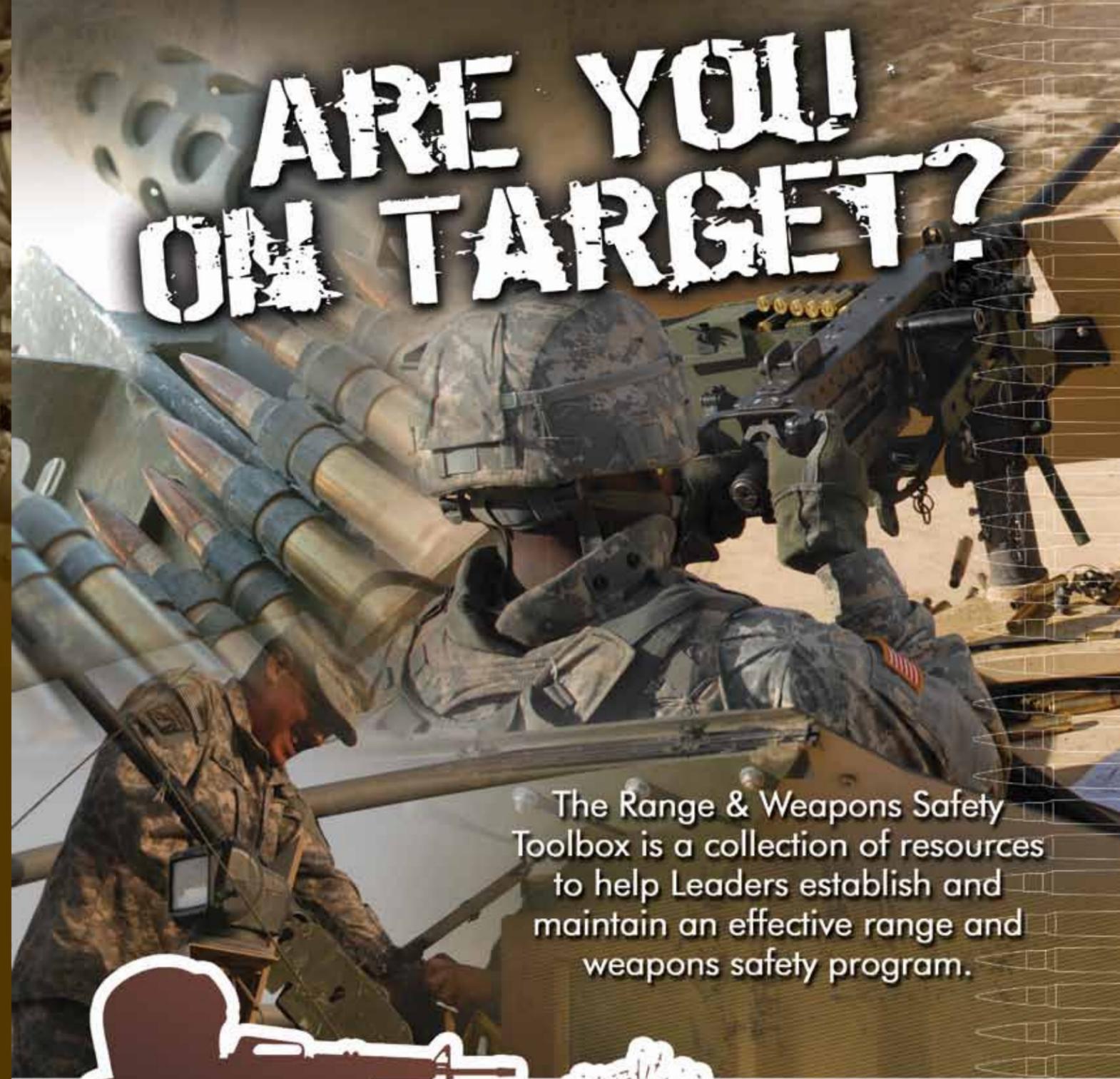
The FTX and live-fire lanes training went off well with no

accidents, injuries or damaged equipment. During the after-action review, I was surprised to see both CRM worksheets included on the AAR agenda. Clearly, Johnson and Stevenson were onto something, and I attribute the success of the mission to them.

I firmly believe that implementing and maintaining an effective unit safety program and effective use of my safety officer is the key to a successful command. However, this will require continuous effort by me, my command team, Leaders at all levels, Soldiers and even their Families to maintain readiness and combat capability. At my safety council meetings, the performance metrics reflect an accident rate reduction with zero off-duty privately owned vehicle accidents. My last CUSR submission also showed considerable improvement. Morale seems greatly improved and, most importantly, we haven't lost anybody to accidents.◀

*Editor's note: The names of the Soldiers in this article are fictitious.*

# ARE YOU ON TARGET?



The Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox is a collection of resources to help Leaders establish and maintain an effective range and weapons safety program.



CHECK IT OUT TODAY!

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

# The Goal is to Arrive SAFELY

**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 ALPHONSO WHITE**  
 Company A, 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Brigade Special Troops Battalion  
 Fort Stewart, Ga.

**Y**ou wouldn't get behind the wheel with half your brain cells "anesthetized" by alcohol. Then why would you drive impaired by fatigue? Maybe fatigue doesn't carry the stigma that alcohol has, but either one will plant you in a median, guardrail or grave. Accidents don't discriminate when it comes to victims; they just look for easy targets.

I was headed home from a 15-month-long tour in Iraq when I boarded a plane in Stuttgart, Germany. I sat impatiently on the plane, my mind filled with thoughts of seeing my Family and friends once again. The trip from Germany was long, but it passed quickly as I thought about home. In all that excitement, not once did I imagine what was in store when we landed stateside.

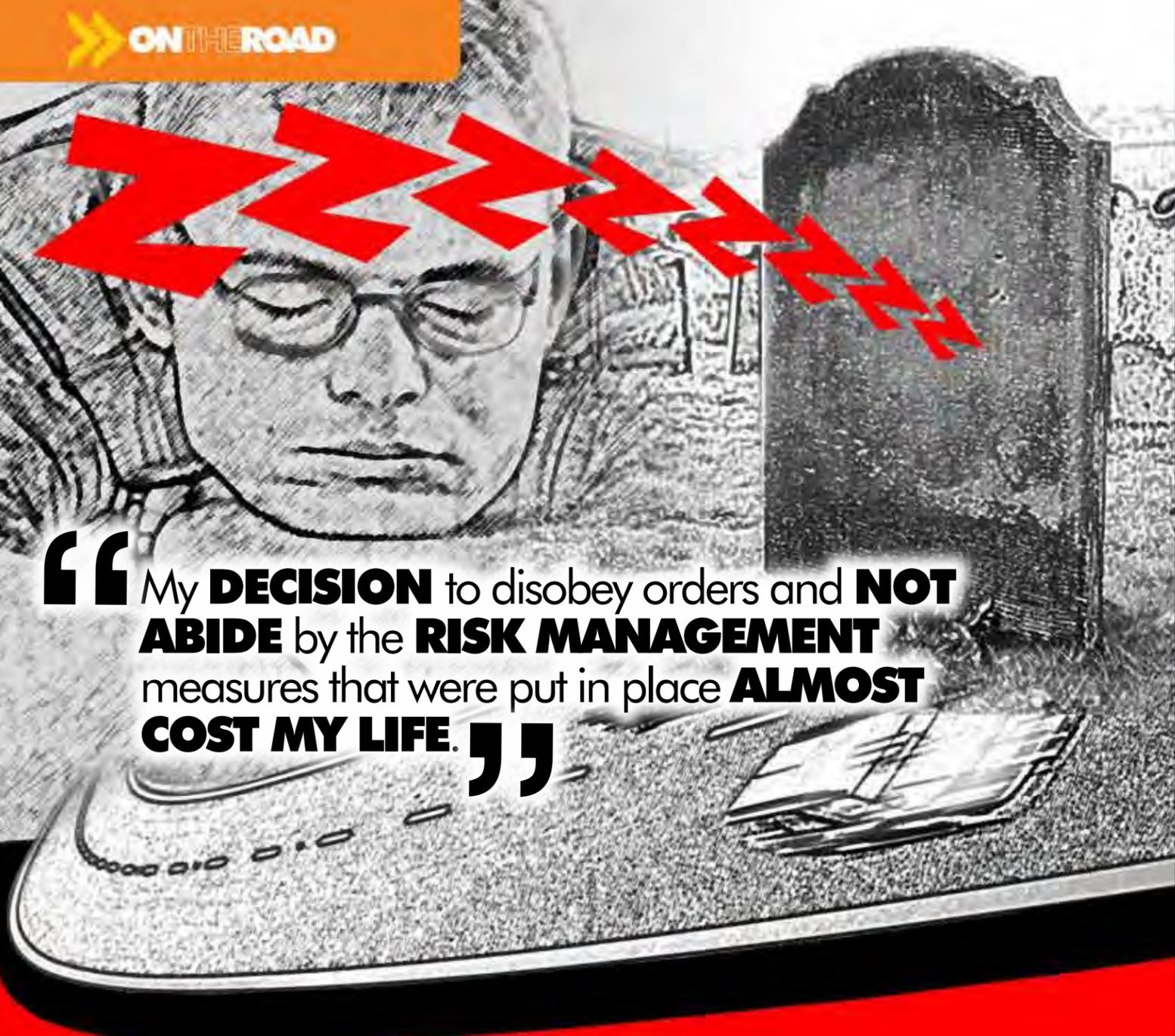
Soon after the plane landed, we were marched into the gymnasium for our return-home ceremony at Fort Stewart, Ga. The ceremony felt like it lasted for hours as I waited to be released to join my Family. My first child was born during my deployment and this would be my first opportunity to see her since my brief rest and recuperation leave. Everything was going the way I had imagined — that is until we were pulled away from our Families for yet another formation.

Our company commander gathered the unit and began giving the restrictions for the 48-hour pass we were each afforded. Among the restrictions, we were not to drink, drive or go outside of a 250-mile radius from Fort Stewart. I felt a little uneasy about those restrictions because my Family had to return to South Carolina. I wanted to spend more time than just the few hours they were down visiting. I told my mother I was thinking about riding back with my Family and

driving back to Fort Stewart the following Monday for the next scheduled formation. I knew that was against the orders that were just put out; however, as a young Soldier, all I was concerned about was spending time with my Family. I didn't feel that I was that tired. I felt fine and couldn't understand why everyone was harping on jet lag. After all, I slept the majority of the plane ride. I thought to myself, "How much sleep do they want me to have before driving?"

After being released from formation, my Family and I got on the road and headed north to South Carolina. I was so elated to have my daughter in my arms and to be headed somewhere not surrounded by Soldiers, sand and porta-potties. That night would go by very fast. Between catching up with my mother and waking up in the middle of the night to feed my daughter, I got very little sleep. However, I felt great and not the least bit tired.

Finally, it came time for me to return to Fort Stewart. It would be a 4 ½-hour drive. What I wasn't expecting was the effect of not driving a privately owned vehicle for more than a year would have on me. I had been driving for about 3 ½ hours when my eyes began getting very heavy. I remember them closing constantly, but I forced myself to stay awake. I told myself I would pull over and stretch at the rest area just across the state



“ My **DECISION** to disobey orders and **NOT ABIDE** by the **RISK MANAGEMENT** measures that were put in place **ALMOST COST MY LIFE.** ”

line — but my plan didn't work.

Before I realized it, I fell asleep and veered into the median. When I opened my eyes, I was startled to see I was halfway into the median headed toward a construction sign. I panicked and overcorrected, causing my car to swerve and barely miss hitting the guardrail. By now, I was sliding out of control and heading toward a tree. I can remember thinking I needed to brace for the impact. Fortunately, my car stopped just short of the tree. I remember just sitting there,

my hands clenching the steering wheel, my eyes wide open and thinking I was the luckiest man alive. After I calmed down, I put the car in reverse, got back on the highway and stopped at the first hotel, where I slept for the night.

My decision to disobey orders and not abide by the risk management measures that were put in place almost cost my life. A price like that is far too much to pay for not having the patience to wait until the travel restrictions were over to see my family. I

realized then driving while fatigued is one of the most dangerous things a person could ever do.

From that moment forward I have strictly abided by rest cycles, along with other driving safety measures I have been taught. I strongly encourage anyone who reads this article to understand your life is worth more than the brief time you'll gain by not pulling over or getting the proper rest before traveling. Make sure to get adequate sleep before you drive. Remember, the goal is to arrive safely.◀

# TRAVEL RISK TRIPS PLANNING SYSTEM

<https://safety.army.mil>

**TRIPS** has a feature that helps subordinates and their supervisors more effectively discuss travel plans. On the 'Review' page while filling out an assessment, there is a comment section for Soldiers and Army Civilians to share information about their trip with their supervisors. Feedback can also be provided by supervisors when they approve or disapprove the assessment. This two-way communication can capture details and guidance to ensure the trip is a safe one.



ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



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](mailto:safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil).

**AVIATION**



**CLASS C**

■ The aircraft experienced an engine-out as the crew demonstrated a simulated engine failure. The aircraft touched down hard, severing the tailboom.



**CLASS C**

■ The aircraft's horizontal stabilator was damaged upon landing during a "quick stop" maneuver in conjunction with landing zone operations.



**CLASS C**

■ Postflight inspection revealed that the No. 2 engine cowling was not secured and sustained in-flight damage.



**CLASS B**

■ The aircraft experienced an overtorque condition (115 percent on the No. 1 engine; 120 percent on No. 2 engine) during approach to a nonstandard helicopter landing zone under night vision goggles. The aircraft returned to base without further incident. Postflight inspection revealed a need to replace the transmission.

■ The aircraft landed hard to a nonstandard HLZ, sustaining damage to the left landing gear assembly, airframe and tailgate.

**CLASS C**

■ An aircraft passenger injured his left ring finger when he caught it while attempting to steady himself by grasping the driveshaft frame. One of the bolts connecting the two driveshafts struck his finger.



**CLASS A**

■ The aircraft tail rotor section struck a concrete barrier during postflight ground taxi for parking. The tail rotor assembly was severed.



**CLASS C**

■ The crew experienced a bird strike while conducting traffic pattern training at a municipal airport.



**CLASS C**

■ The air vehicle operator lost link with the system for unknown reasons while in flight. The unmanned aircraft was visually tracked to the point of ground descent, but was unable to be located.



**CLASS B**

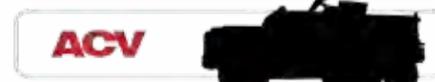
■ The UA experienced an engine malfunction during flight. The crew deployed the recovery chute, and the system landed with damage.



**CLASS C**

■ The crew experienced engine RPM fluctuations (2160-4500) during final approach to land. The UA came to rest beyond the forward operating base.

**GROUND**



**CLASS A**

■ A civilian prison guard was killed when the van she was riding in collided with a Mine



Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. None of the Soldiers in the MRAP were injured; however, the eight other van occupants suffered injuries.

■ A Soldier was killed and nine others injured when their Stryker struck a boulder and overturned during convoy operations.



**CLASS A**

■ A civilian died when her vehicle collided with a HMMWV on a four-lane highway. Two Soldiers in the HMMWV were treated for minor injuries.

**DRIVING**



■ A Soldier was killed when his vehicle crossed the centerline and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer.

■ A Soldier died when he drifted across the centerline and collided with an approaching vehicle.

■ A Soldier going the wrong way on an interstate struck another vehicle head-on and killed the Soldier driving that vehicle.

■ A Soldier died when he lost control of his speeding vehicle and crashed. The vehicle was consumed by flames.

**CLASS C**

■ A Soldier broke his back when his vehicle struck an embankment after he braked to avoid another motorist on an icy road and lost control.



**CLASS A**

■ A Soldier was killed when she lost control of her motorcycle in a curve.

■ A Soldier died when he lost control of a borrowed motorcycle and struck a street sign. Although the Soldier was wearing a helmet, he was neither trained nor licensed to ride a motorcycle.

**CLASS B**

■ A Soldier was riding through an intersection when he collided with a van that ran a stop sign. The Soldier was wearing his complete personal protective equipment, but was thrown from his bike and required the amputation of one testicle as the result of his injuries.



**CLASS C**

■ A Soldier broke his wrist when he was forced to lay down his motorcycle to avoid a vehicle that had stopped abruptly in front of him.

■ A Soldier was passing another vehicle when he collided with a deer that ran into his path.

■ A Soldier who was an experienced dirt bike rider crashed during a jump and separated his shoulder.



TAKE THE CHALLENGE,  
LEARN THE LESSON.

# FIREARMS safety techniques

**GIVE IT A SHOT!**

Visit <https://safety.army.mil/firearm-safety>  
and get on target today

IMPARTIET! 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



# You don't have to reinvent the wheel.

When preparing to go downrange, check out the Deployment Guide for Brigade Combat Team Safety Professionals for valuable lessons learned, resources, tools and other useful information. While developed for BCT safety professionals, anybody can use this deployment guide. Visit <https://safety.army.mil/deploymentguide> to download or order a DVD copy of the guide.

## Deployment Guide

for  
Brigade Combat Team Safety Professionals



July 2011



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