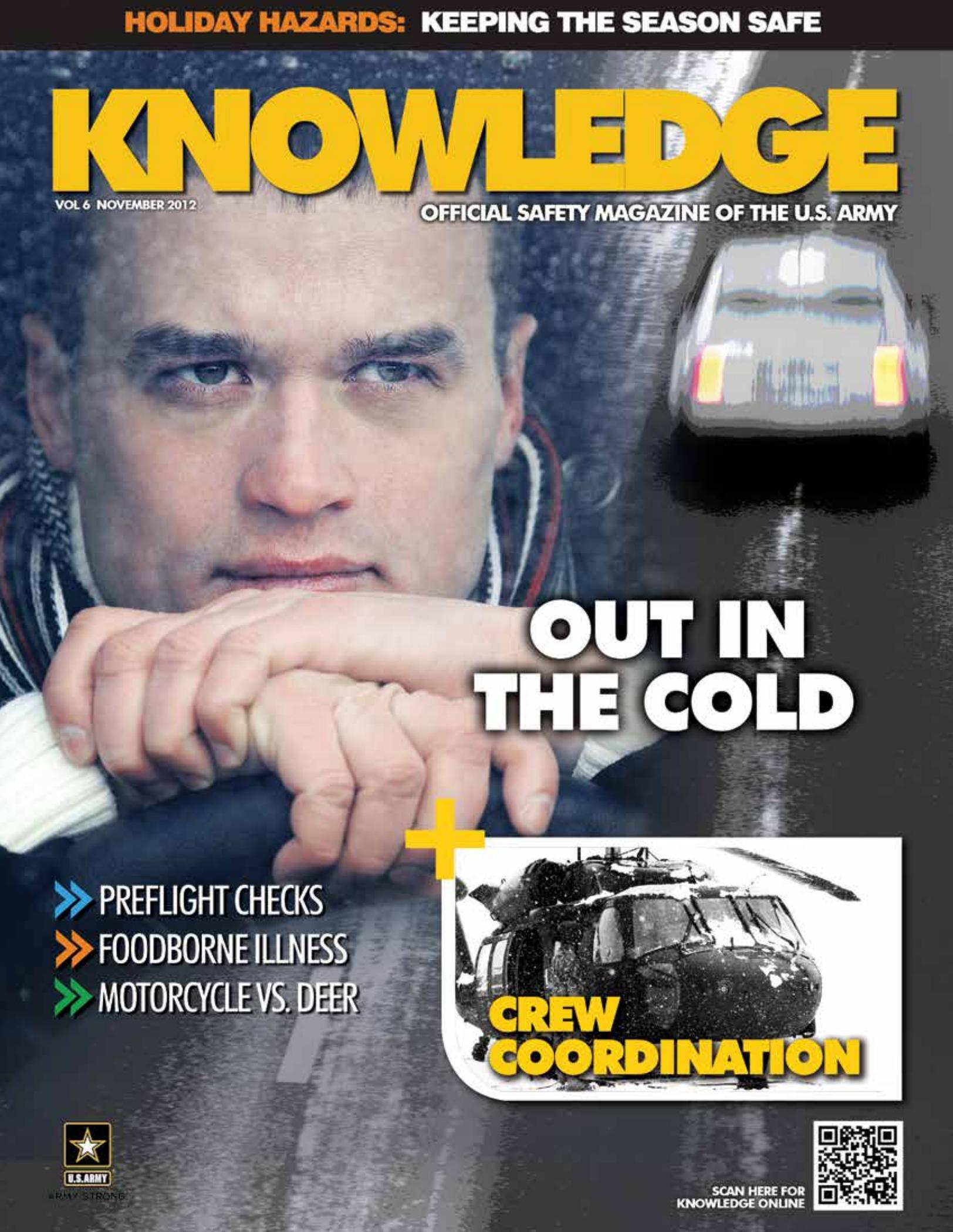


HOLIDAY HAZARDS: KEEPING THE SEASON SAFE

KNOWLEDGE

VOL. 6 NOVEMBER 2012

OFFICIAL SAFETY MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. ARMY



OUT IN THE COLD

- PREFLIGHT CHECKS
- FOODBORNE ILLNESS
- MOTORCYCLE VS. DEER



U.S. ARMY

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Mission: Route Security/Recon

Hazards

- Material Failure- Engine
- Tactical threat
- Failure to follow published emergency procedures

Results

- Aircraft destroyed
- One Soldier permanently disabled
- One Soldier seriously injured

Controls

- During mission planning evaluate aircraft emergency responses in light of the tactical threat
- Ensure crews are familiar with the possible consequences of choosing not to follow published emergency procedures

Mission: Off Duty

Hazards

- Driving while fatigued from a 14.5 hour duty day followed by late night activities
- Failure to use seat belts
- Excessively worn tires

Results

- One Soldier fatality

Controls

- Educate Soldiers on the increase of driving while fatigued
- Continue to reinforce the requirements & benefits of using vehicle seat belts
- Establish & execute appropriate inspection programs

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SAFETY FEATURES



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U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

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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.

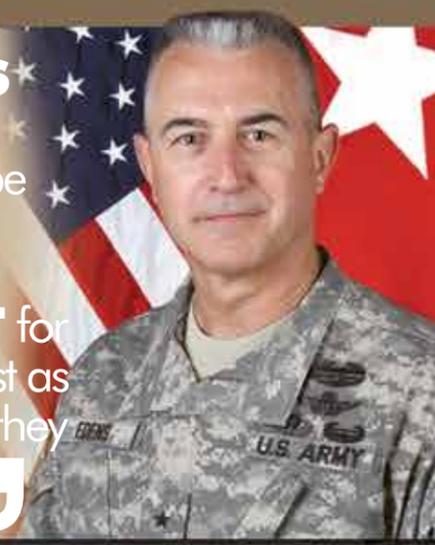
We welcome your feedback. Please email comments to safe.knowledge@conus.army.mil.

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 christopher.frazier4@us.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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In **STAND DOWNS** and weekend safety briefings, we should be **SETTING THE EXPECTATION** that Soldiers **LOOK OUT** for **ONE ANOTHER** just as fiercely at **HOME** as they do in the **FIGHT**.



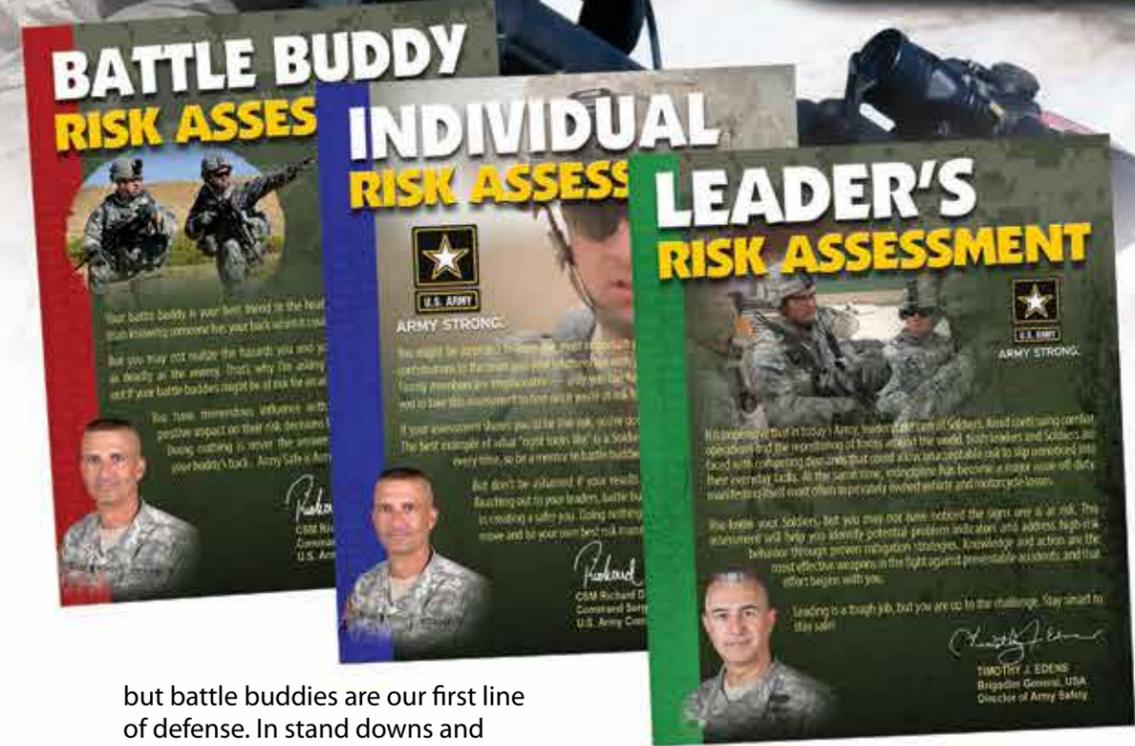
GIVING OUR BEST EFFORT

There's an old saying in the Army that goes something like this: "The Navy is about boats, the Air Force is about planes, but the Army is about people." That statement doesn't give our sister services credit for caring for their troops, which they absolutely do, but it illustrates a point. The essence of our Army is the American Soldier, and that's why we work so hard to protect our men and women from unnecessary risk, whatever it may be. And, after losing 455 Soldiers to suicide or accidents during 2011, it's more important than ever that we stay engaged in the fight against preventable loss.

Recently, we took a day to stand down for suicide awareness and prevention. I've rarely been in training that generated such somber and sincere discussion, and that's especially important given this growing problem facing our Soldiers and their Families. But, I wonder, couldn't we make our safety stand downs just as somber and impactful? Let's not appear to take suicide more seriously than accidental fatalities — the end result of both is the loss of an irreplaceable Soldier. I'm not downplaying the urgency of suicide in any way; it is without doubt one of the biggest issues facing our Army today. What I'm

asking is that we all treat accidents and their losses with urgency as well, and acknowledge that stopping them requires the same attention and commitment we've seen from our force in combating suicide. In many ways, suicides and accidents are linked, and we can confront these challenges at the same time. Prevention of both tragedies is, I believe, fundamentally a function of engaged leadership and the battle buddy system. Think about the Soldiers who could be at risk within your formations. The one going through personal or financial problems might not be considering suicide yet, but may not think twice

about taking his aggression out on the road in his POV or on his motorcycle. The new Soldier who feels isolated among her peers might drink to excess to fit in with the crowd, exposing herself to a whole new level of risk on the drive or walk home. There's no end to the possible combinations of factors that put our Soldiers at risk, but your engaged leadership and mentorship has and can continue to create an environment where leaders and led alike identify risky behavior before it reaches disastrous and tragic outcomes. Involved and caring leaders are an important part of prevention,



but battle buddies are our first line of defense. In stand downs and weekend safety briefings, we should be setting the expectation that Soldiers look out for one another as fiercely at home as they do in the fight. The Army is no different than any other organization; just like at school, there are always cliques of Soldiers who hang together on and off duty. Get to know these groups; the "unofficial" leader is usually pretty easy to figure out, so engage him or her first for battle buddy mentoring. Peers have amazing influence on one another, and we must tap into it. The USACR/Safety Center has

several tools that can assist you and your Soldiers in identifying those at risk. The Leader, Battle Buddy, and Individual Risk Assessment Cards, available at <https://safety.army.mil>, are similar to the ACE cards our Soldiers carry for suicide prevention. A series of questions, mitigation measures and professional resources provide users with the information they need to stay safe and get help, if needed. The cards are formatted on our site for easy reproduction — all you have to do is hit "print" and distribute among your individual units.

As we close this year and move into the next, I want to thank you for your commitment to safety, which resulted in fewer accidental losses during fiscal 2012 than previous years. I want us to stay sharp, look ahead and consider how we can continue moving in the right direction this coming year. We must remain ever vigilant against the mindset that accidents "just happen"; in reality, they are often preventable. If we were to all treat safety with the same urgency that we do and ought to give suicide, I have no doubt our accident rates will continue to decline. Our Soldiers are our Army, and we owe them our very best efforts!◀

Army Safe is Army Strong!
Timothy J. Edens
TIMOTHY J. EDENS
Brigadier General, USA
Director of Army Safety



FORECAST FOR 'LIGHT SNOW'

It was the week I took my pilot-in-command ride in Korea. I was stationed at Camp Humphreys with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, General Support Aviation Battalion (MEDEVAC). It was December and I was tasked to fly to Camp Casey with a fairly new lieutenant. We were given four hours of flying time, so after returning, we still had more than an hour left for medic training.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 JOSEPH DESCHNER
National Training Center
Fort Irwin, Calif.

We refueled and got an update on the weather from the Air Force meteorologist at Camp Humphreys. The METRO observer reported snow falling over the ocean, adding that in an hour and a half we would receive light snow that would pass over our area quickly. Heavier snow was forecast later in the afternoon, but we'd be back several hours before its arrival. Army Regulation

95-1 states in section 5-2, "destination weather must be forecast to be equal to, or greater than, VFR minimums at estimated time of arrival through 1 hour after ETA."

The forecast we'd received gave us legal weather for the last hour of our flight. We had several medics in the back needing to complete their live hoist qualifications, so we headed out to LZ Elbow, which was in the maintenance test valley, about a 10-minute flight south of Camp Humphreys.

Once at the LZ, we set down and let Sgt. Blass, our flight instructor, set up the 100-

pound cement block to reset the hoist. This procedure ensures the hoist's cable is wrapped tightly around the internal reel. Once ready, we hovered at 250 feet to begin the reset procedure. That was when the snow started to fall. We completed the reset, but now the snow was much heavier and we needed to land at the LZ.

This weather was much, much worse than METRO had given us 20 minutes prior. The visibility decreased to a one-quarter mile with a ceiling of less than 100 feet. Two mountain ranges separated us from METRO, so we couldn't pick up their signal unless we were in the traffic pattern. We tried unsuccessfully to call them on the radio. Since we could only reach them by calling on a cellphone, we took the aircraft to an idle at the LZ and called METRO. The observer who briefed us apologized for the rapid weather change and said the soonest we could leave and attempt to return to the airfield would be in 45 minutes. He also told us we'd have a large enough window to return to the runway, which was eight miles north of us. I spoke with the commander and let him know our situation. He gave us the approval to wait and return to station when the weather improved. After 45 minutes, visibility improved to a half mile with a 500-foot ceiling.

Before taking off, I asked the crew and they all agreed that they were comfortable returning to base at that time. The crew chief and I had logged 150 hours in the area and were very familiar with the return route. I went over the inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions plan again. I wanted to ensure if the ceiling dropped again and we were in an area where we couldn't set down, we would fully commit to the instrument landing system Runway 32 approach.

I turned on the windshield anti-ice to melt the falling snow. We also turned on the pitot heat and engine anti-ice, verifying they were working. The temperature was 6 F on the surface, which meant we'd encounter icing if approach control

took us up to 3,200 feet, as per the published approach procedure. We advanced the power control levers and did our before-takeoff checks. We had six people in the aircraft and, according to our current conditions, had plenty of power if we needed to do an ILS approach.

I flew the return route by following the edge of a river that led from the LZ to a lake. Then we flew along the edge of the lake to Check Point 3, which was our inbound reporting point to the pattern. Chapter 6 of the aircrew training manual covers the aircrew coordination needed between crewmembers to safely, efficiently and effectively perform their tasks. Our crew always briefed the different aspects of aircrew coordination before taking off. As we returned, everyone stayed calm and concentrated on the task at hand.

We made it back to the runway

safely, thanks to effective crew coordination. Everyone remained calm, fully thought through each situation and effectively communicated with each other. A flight that normally took 10 minutes took 50 instead, but ended successfully because the crew worked together effectively as a team.

After we landed, I went into the weather office, where the forecaster apologized profusely for giving an inaccurate brief. He said he hadn't predicted the cloud layer coming from the west to develop into a line and drop so much snow at lower levels. He realized his inaccurate forecast jeopardized our lives. I asked him to develop a way to contact us (my cell number was left on the flight plan) and to back up his forecast with one from a more experienced forecaster to avoid this happening again in the future.◀

“ He REALIZED his inaccurate FORECAST JEOPARDIZED OUR LIVES. ”

HOW SAFE IS YOUR HOLIDAY

FEAST?

SGT. 1ST CLASS DEB HIBBERT
111th Army Band
Pearl City, Hawaii

Who doesn't like to eat? OK, there may be a few people like my granddaughter, Sophia, but most of us enjoy eating. Holidays are the best because grandma makes all of your favorites, and Aunt Pat brings lots of goodies too. And don't forget the potluck buffets at the office (these are my favorite). But let's think about this: Aunt Pat has a three-hour drive to get to grandma's house, and I remember the boss talking about his refrigerator wasn't working properly. So how safe is that food we are about to consume?

Some of our most favorite holiday foods are potentially the most dangerous. We used to call it food poisoning, but now, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, when certain disease-causing bacteria or pathogens contaminate food, they can cause foodborne illness. How do you know if you have a foodborne illness? The symptoms are flu-like in nature and include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fever.

A foodborne illness is serious and, if not treated, can be fatal. The USDA recommends having and using a four-step action plan in the event that you experience these symptoms:

1. Consult your physician or health care provider, or seek medical treatment as appropriate.
2. Preserve the food.
3. Save all the packaging materials, such as cans or cartons.
4. Call your local health

department if you believe you became ill from food you ate in a restaurant or other food establishment.

According to the USDA, the major pathogens that cause foodborne illness include Salmonella, Listeria monocytogenes, Campylobacter jejuni and Escherichia coli (E. coli). The following are some foods and symptoms that are associated with these illnesses:

Salmonella

- Raw or undercooked eggs, poultry and meat
- Unpasteurized milk or juice
- Cheese and seafood
- Contaminated fresh fruits and vegetables

Symptoms of Salmonella include stomach pain, diarrhea, nausea, chills, fever and/or headache. These symptoms appear within eight to 72 hours after eating and may last four to seven days.

Listeria Monocytogenes

- Contaminated hot dogs, luncheon meats, cold cuts and other deli-style meat and poultry
- Soft cheeses and unpasteurized milk
- Store-made salads such as ham salad, chicken salad or seafood salad

Symptoms include fever, chills, headache, backache, upset stomach, abdominal pain and diarrhea. This foodborne illness is extremely dangerous for individuals with weakened immune systems and pregnant women. It may take up to three weeks to become ill.

Campylobacter Jejuni

- Contaminated water
- Unpasteurized milk
- Raw or undercooked meat, poultry or shellfish

Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle pain followed by diarrhea (sometimes bloody), abdominal pain and nausea. Symptoms appear within two to five days after eating and may last seven to 10 days.

E. coli

- Undercooked beef, especially hamburger
- Unpasteurized milk and juices
- Contaminated raw fruits and vegetables
- Contaminated water

Symptoms of E. coli include

diarrhea (often bloody), abdominal cramps and vomiting. These symptoms may begin one to eight days after food is eaten and can last five to 10 days.

Staying Safe

We have learned that foodborne pathogens can contaminate just about everything we eat — water, milk, eggs, meat and poultry. So how do we prepare and consume food safely? The USDA recommends using these four steps to food safety:

1. Clean

- Wash hands the right way — for 20 seconds with soap and running water.
- Wash surfaces and utensils after each use.
- Wash fruits and veggies — but not meat, poultry or eggs!

2. Separate

- Use separate cutting boards and plates for produce and for meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- Keep meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate

from all other foods at the grocery store.

- Keep meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.

3. Cook

- Use a food thermometer.
- Keep food hot after cooking (at 140 F or above).
- Microwave food thoroughly (to 165 F or above).

4. Chill

- Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours.
- Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter.
- Know when to throw out food.

When you gather for family feasts during the holidays, remember to handle and prepare food safely. Be aware of the symptoms of foodborne illness and have an action plan in place. Make the four steps to food safety — Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill — an everyday habit. And remember, when in doubt, throw it out! ◀◀



For additional information on food safety, visit the U.S. Army Public Health Command website at <http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/foodwater/ifs/Pages/default.aspx> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Food Safety Office at <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/food-safety-office.html>.



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.



DEER CROSSING

STAFF SGT. JAMES STRASSER
A Company, 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry Regiment
Pennsylvania Army National Guard
Honesdale, Pa.

Living in northeastern Pennsylvania, where the deer population is abundant, I've had more than my fair share of run-ins with our four-legged friends while riding my motorcycle. Despite my previous encounters, it took a more serious accident before I truly learned to expect the unexpected.

I have had three incidents involving deer while riding my Harley-Davidson two-up, meaning I had a passenger on the back of the bike. In each of those incidents, instead of hitting my brakes, I depressed my clutch and rode through the impact, keeping the tire(s) rolling. This maneuver allowed me to remain in control of the motorcycle. If I had locked up the brakes, I'd have gone into a skid. I would have lost control and laid down the bike.

My fourth and most recent wildlife encounter occurred on a country back road. As I entered a left-hand curve, a deer sprinted

out of the woods straight at me. The course of action I took was to swerve to the right to avoid making contact with him. I then had to pull the motorcycle back hard to the left to stay on track with the direction the road was taking. This put me into a left-side skid for about 25 to 30 feet. Sparks flew as I tried to gain

control. With the road pavement running out in the direction of the skid, I decided to give it some gas to try and get on track. That worked; however, it was too late and my rear tire came off the side of the road, causing me and my 2008 Heritage Softail Classic to flip to the right.

After a series of rolls, I quickly

jumped up and checked myself for injuries. By this time, my buddies who were riding behind me had come to a stop. They were shocked to see me standing up after witnessing what looked like a fireworks display caused by the sparks created as the metal scraped the pavement. We looked over the bike — which had a lot of damage, but was still drivable — before making the eight-mile ride back home.

Once in my driveway, I started to remove my leathers but was unable to lift my right arm. There was no pain, but it seemed to be locked in place. It was only after we'd taken off my jacket and shirts that we could see my right clavicle was sticking up about two and a half inches

“When **DOCTORS PERFORMED** an MRI, they discovered I also had **BROKEN MY NECK** in three places.”

SHARING THE ROAD WITH NATURE

Here are some tips from motorcyclecruiser.com to help you avoid deer-motorcycle collisions:

- Deer travel in groups. One deer means there probably are more, so slow down immediately even if the one you see is off the road and running away.
- Heed deer crossing signs, particularly in the seasons and times of day when deer are active. Slow down, use your high beams and cover the brakes.
- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation says deer collisions peak in October and November, with a smaller peak in May and June. Such crashes between April and August are most likely to occur between 8 p.m. and midnight. Between November and January, 5 to 10 p.m. were the danger times.
- Additional good, powerful driving lights are worth their weight in gold on a deserted road at night. Alternatively, fit a headlamp with a 100-watt high beam.
- Noise — a horn, revving your engine, etc. — might drive deer away.
- Flashing your headlights can break the spell that seems to cause deer to freeze.
- Don't challenge large animals by approaching them. A buffalo, moose, elk, mountain lion, bear or large deer might attack to drive you off. Stay back and consider turning and riding farther away.
- Stay away from an injured animal. It might attack or injure you unintentionally if it comes to and tries to escape.
- Don't swerve if a collision appears imminent. Braking hard right up to the point of impact is good, but you want to be stabilized if you do collide, which will give you the greatest chance of remaining upright.
- Spread out if riding in a group. This pattern will keep a rider who hits a deer from taking other riders down with him.
- Wear protective gear. As with other crashes, no one plans to hit an animal. The only way to be ready when it happens is to be ready on every ride.



DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, more than 1.5 million deer-vehicle accidents occur annually in the United States, killing about 150 people and causing at least \$1 billion in vehicle damage. Motorcycle riders account for about half of the deaths in vehicle-animal crashes despite the fact that cars, trucks and SUVs outnumber motorcycles on the road 40 to 1.

above where it should be. To make a long story short, I now have new ligaments, tendons, two plates and four screws in my right shoulder. To make matters worse, about a week after my surgery, I slipped on some ice and reinjured my shoulder. When doctors performed an MRI, they discovered I also had broken my neck in three places.

Fortunately, my injuries eventually healed and my bike was repaired, allowing me to enjoy many more hours cruising the back roads. But this incident left me with several important lessons learned.

1. Wear all your personal protective equipment. During the accident sequence, I hit four large boulders — one with my head. My helmet saved my life that day, and

riding leathers helped limit the injuries to my body as I slid down the road. There is no substitute for good PPE.

2. Don't become complacent.

I'd already hit three deer before this incident and always managed to keep the bike upright. This made me both complacent and overconfident in my abilities. Because the other incidents took place on straight roads, I never considered that a deer would come at me while I was in the curve.

3. Even when you're close to home, keep alert. For years, I've heard that most accidents happen close to home. It took this accident for me to believe it.

4. Expect the unexpected.

Deer — and some motorists, for that matter — are unpredictable and don't adhere to the rules of the road.

Always keep your head on a swivel so you aren't caught by surprise when a monster buck comes barreling out of the treeline or a distracted driver merges into your lane.◀



RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

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



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

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

Have you heard about the new feature on TRIPS?

TRIPS now provides users with a more detailed motorcycle assessment, allowing them to better capture their riding experience.

TRAVEL RISK
TRIPS
PLANNING SYSTEM
<https://safety.army.mil>



RISK MANAGEMENT Belongs in Every Cockpit

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 (P) DAVE STOCK
2nd Aviation Detachment
United States Military Academy
West Point, N.Y.

These days, it seems as though more and more Soldiers are learning to fly private planes. More than half of the pilots and crew chiefs in my unit have some form of fixed-wing rating or training. I recently attended an Army school and 20 percent of the class held airplane ratings, ranging from flight instructor to private pilot. The numbers appear to be growing as the cost and availability of flight training becomes more reasonable. With the increasing number of Soldiers aiming toward the sky in their own aircraft or rentals from local fixed-based operators, has the Army noticed this trend and started talking about it? Are we educating leaders and Soldiers about the risks in private aviation? Are we teaching them to use risk management as they would for driving safety and other off-duty activities?

In July 2010, I made up my mind that I was no longer going to let the unit flight schedule limit my flying. I headed out to a local airport and inquired about learning to fly airplanes. Having already earned my commercial instrument rotary-wing pilot certificate, I only needed half as many hours as a normal first-time flyer to earn my Airplane, Single Engine, Land – Private Pilot endorsement. Within a few short months, I completed my check ride and was legal to fly whenever I wanted. In fact, just four months after my first fixed-wing flight, I purchased an airplane, completed my instrument rating and began living the dream.

On the flight home from picking up my plane, I met one of the most experienced Army aviators around, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jimmy Stidfole, an experimental test pilot with the Aviation Applied Technology

Directorate at Fort Eustis, Va. He recognized a friend of mine who was waiting for me to land. After landing, Jim and I spoke for a few moments as he congratulated me on my purchase and welcomed me to the aircraft owner's club. I never would have imagined that I'd be attending Jim's memorial service five months later.

I'll never forget the day he died. I was watching the late-night news when I saw a report of a local plane crash. Earlier that day, Jim had departed our airport with his son aboard his personal airplane, landed at another location and let his son out to play with his grandmother. Then Jim's sister got into the aircraft and they departed on a pleasure flight. Eyewitness reports stated that his airplane's engine started to sputter as he climbed after takeoff. I truly believe if there was ever a pilot



some in Army aviation don't want to pry too much for fear of appearing uninformed even though, outside of takeoff and landing, there isn't a big difference between airplanes and helicopters. Ignoring this issue won't make flying private aircraft any safer, so I encourage leaders at all levels to engage the private pilots in their ranks. Just as we would for any mission, talk to them about their currency, proficiency, weather and maintenance. Help them assess the hazards and implement controls. Make sure they understand that even the best trained can find themselves in a bad situation. As Gen. B.B. Bell used to promote, a little "under the oak tree counseling" could make a huge difference when Soldiers take to the sky in their private airplanes. Training, preventative maintenance and good planning won't remove all risk from private plane flying, but maybe it will help keep some of the world's best pilots within our ranks. ◀

capable of saving the aircraft that day it was Jim. Unfortunately, he was unable to recover and crash-landed in a field not far from the runway. That day, Army aviation lost a wonderful pilot in an accident that also spelled tragedy for his wife and children. His death left me facing the reality that one of the best-trained, most experienced pilots in the world perished doing the same thing I did every week. That shook me, as I had just a fraction of his experience. I didn't fly my airplane for a month following Jim's death. I couldn't shake the thought of the same thing happening to my family and friends. Jim wasn't the only Soldier to die in a private airplane crash in 2011. Another Soldier died in Alaska when his engine failed. Recently, two civilian pilots from the same area where Jim lived experienced engine failures. Fortunately, they managed to crash-land safely, and their passengers walked away. However, these accidents highlight the risks in flying single-engine airplanes — risks that can no longer be overlooked. Over the years, I've learned the Army's risk management process pretty

well. I've done TRiPS assessments before going on leave, pass or TDY and received safety training for a variety of off-duty activities. However, I've never heard an in-depth discussion about privately owned aircraft safety. There is no counterpart to TRiPS for Soldiers who fly private aircraft. Perhaps

“ Are we **TEACHING THEM** to use **RISK MANAGEMENT** as they would for **DRIVING SAFETY** and other **OFF-DUTY ACTIVITIES?** ”

ARE YOU READY?

- Wouldn't you like to know if your unit is about to experience a mishap?
- Wouldn't you like to prevent the loss of personnel and equipment?
- Don't you want to protect your combat power?



ARAP is a Web-based initiative that provides battalion-level commanders with data on their formation's readiness posture.

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WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT THAT WAY

BRANDON WATSON
Army Fleet Support
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Complacency is a known problem in the Army and often recognized as a causal factor in accidents. Sometimes we take shortcuts because we've become complacent and more lax about our personal safety. The places that feel the most familiar can be the most unsafe because the menace is not always so obvious. When we feel confident that an environment is stable, we often forget things are subject to change. Situations can become unsteady in an instant, so we must remember there's always the potential for a catastrophe.

In 2004, my transportation unit was attached to a heavy equipment transporter company in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We were responsible for transporting tanks, Strykers and other equipment that needed to be moved throughout Iraq. As you can imagine, we traveled many miles. We'd often spend hours or days on end driving until we were exhausted. After long trips, it was common practice for our unit to stop the convoy and check our trucks and the loads for damage. After doing this so many times throughout our rotation, it became

routine. Soldiers were becoming complacent, sometimes forgetting the dangers lurking out there.

One day, we stopped on a road somewhere in north central Iraq. We got out and were checking the loads when all of a sudden, over the radio, we heard a panicked scream repeating, "IED! IED!" Sure enough, there was an improvised explosive device lying on the side of the road, right in the middle of the convoy! Thankfully, there weren't any enemies around to detonate it, so we averted disaster. Had we been more vigilant and aware of our surroundings, I'm confident we would've

selected a safer spot to stop. Situational awareness saves lives, especially during combat operations.

For me, it's scary to think what it takes to wake up an organization. This was a prime example of complacency. A simple task completed so many times in the past could've turned tragic very quickly.

If we stop for a moment and think, I'm sure we can all come up with instances when we've been complacent. It happens because we perform many functions on a continual basis. Many of our jobs are repetitive in nature, and the more we repeat a task, the better

the chance we have of becoming complacent.

How many times have you heard someone say, "We've always done it that way," when questioned about why they performed a task a certain way? Since it has stood the test of time, then it must be correct to complete the task properly, right? Well, that's not necessarily true. The very fact that the task is repeated often can draw us into the complacency trap. We learn to expect proven results until one day the outcome changes for the worse. Stay alert, stay alive and remain diligent in your accident prevention efforts. <<

DID YOU KNOW?

The Ground Risk Assessment Tool empowers leaders and Soldiers to reduce accidental loss and injury by incorporating risk management into a quick, user-friendly system that eases the mission planning process. GRAT provides users with up-to-date accident statistics, relevant accident vignettes and guidance,

including regulations, training circulars, field manuals, and tactics, techniques and procedures. In doing so, GRAT helps ensure users capture a complete picture of hazards and controls they may not have previously considered. GRAT allows users to save time, learn from others' mistakes and integrate risk management into all their

activities, whether on or off duty. By incorporating safety into mission planning at every echelon, GRAT ensures leaders and Soldiers have the information they need to reduce accidental loss and protect and maintain combat power. Check out GRAT today by visiting <https://grat.safety.army.mil/GRAT> (AKO login required).

Up in

COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF

Flames

As winter temperatures fall, the risk for fires rises. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, fires cause about 2,000 injuries and more than \$500 million in damage each holiday season.

To prevent a fire, you need to understand how one is created. Fire requires three components — oxygen, fuel and a heat source. Simply eliminating any one of these will prevent a fire. However, since oxygen exists naturally in the atmosphere, you need to concentrate on keeping fuel and heat sources apart. Heat can be produced by heaters, lights, appliances or fire itself. Fuel is anything that will burn, including draperies, trash, dry wood and even wires.

If you use a fireplace for heat, have your chimney inspected and cleaned by a professional to remove any creosote — the dark brown or black flammable tar that builds up inside. Using a metal mesh fireplace screen will keep burning embers from flying out. If you'll be using artificial logs, follow the instructions closely. In addition, never burn trash, to include wrapping paper, in your fireplace.

Space heaters can be another effective way to heat your home, but be careful and follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use one properly. If you have a window above a heater, make sure the drapes don't touch it. In fact, when using a space heater, keep everything at least three feet away, including furniture.

Christmas trees are another holiday fire hazard. Pick a fresh, green tree with needles that don't break easily. When bounced on the ground, very few needles should fall off. To keep your tree fresh, keep it away from heat and make sure the stand is full of water. If you select an artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant and keep it away from heaters.

When it comes to decorating your house with holiday lights, be sure to use only Underwriters Laboratory-approved equipment. Test your holiday lights, whether they are old or new, before you use them. Check each strand to ensure the wires aren't frayed and the insulation is in good condition. Replace any lights that are missing or inoperable. As a rule of thumb, don't link more than three strands

together unless the manufacturer says it is safe to do so. Never leave your lights on unattended and periodically check the wires, which should not be warm to the touch. Be careful not to overload electrical sockets (this rule holds true throughout the entire year!). Also avoid using candles; but if you do, be very careful. Ensure they can't be tipped easily and never put them on a tree or leave your house while they're burning.

These tips are a starting point to help you be safe during the holiday season. Here are some additional recommendations to keep you safe throughout the year:

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on each floor of your home and located outside each sleeping area.
- Test the batteries in your smoke alarms each month, and change the batteries twice a year.
- Never leave the kitchen unattended when cooking, and avoid open flames when you're wearing loose clothing.
- Never overload electrical sockets.
- Plan and practice a fire escape plan with your family.
- Contact your local fire department concerning any special needs of family members and to have your fire escape plan reviewed.
- Most local or post fire departments will show you where to install smoke detectors in your home. Normally this is a free service.
- Keep a phone near your bed so you can call 911 in an emergency.
- Think about fire prevention every day!

Keep in mind, fire prevention needs to be practiced year-round to be effective. Know the signs — know what's right — do what's right. For more topics, tips and resources, visit the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center winter safety campaign page at <https://safety.army.mil> «

Driving in winter weather can create many challenges for motorists who aren't properly prepared. Growing up in the South, I didn't have many encounters with snowy days and icy roads. That lack of experience nearly proved costly for me one winter on a long trip from Colorado to Georgia.

OUT IN THE COLD

SGT. 1ST CLASS CARNELL RICHARDSON
201st Regional Support Group
Georgia Army National Guard
Fort Gordon, Ga.

In 1991, I was stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., and had decided to use some leave and drive back home to Georgia. The extended forecast called for snow, but I figured I would be long gone before it arrived. The skies were clear the morning I left, so I neglected to check the weather and the road conditions for my route. Everything was going as planned when I started to see snow on the roadsides.

I didn't even have a chance to give the snow much thought when my car started sliding out of control. I'd driven over a patch of black ice and was now heading toward the edge of the road. I tried to correct my direction of travel, but the car kept sliding. I eventually ended up in a ditch on the side of the road.

Since I did not prepare properly, I was now stuck on

the side of the road in a ditch without any blankets or food. And being that this was the early 1990s, I — like most folks at that time — didn't have a cellphone I could use to call for help. Fortunately, I only had to wait about an hour before another motorist came by and pulled my car out of the ditch. Once back on the road, I was able to continue my trip without any further incidents.

This experience made me realize how important it is to fully prepare for a trip — regardless the weather conditions, which can change in an instant. Before even getting on the road, I inspect my vehicle's ignition, battery, headlights and taillights, brakes, wipers, fuel and exhaust systems, heater/defroster, and tires. Once I'm sure everything is in good working order, I



adhere to the following winter driving tips from the Texas Department of Transportation:

- Check the road conditions in your area and stay tuned to local news broadcasts for more information on roadway and weather conditions.
- Remove snow and ice from your vehicle before you drive, making sure the headlights and taillights are visible.
- Accelerate slowly.
- Increase your following distance.
- Brake gently in slow, steady strokes to see how much traction you have, and begin braking early when approaching intersections or stops.
- Approach bridges, shaded spots, overpasses and turns slowly.
- Never use cruise control in

winter driving conditions.

- Use non-freezing windshield washer fluid.
 - Use snow tires and/or chains (where allowed).
- It's also a good idea to keep a winter survival kit in your vehicle in case of an emergency. According to the Texas DOT, a good kit should include at least the following items:
- Flares
 - Blankets and warm clothes
 - Shovel and scraper
 - Flashlight and batteries
 - Candles or Sterno flame

- Lighter or matches
- First-aid kit
- Booster cables
- Chain/tow strap
- Non-perishable food
- Water

Winter driving can pose risks for even the most experienced drivers. However, being properly prepared can mean the difference between safely reaching your destination and being left out in the cold.◀◀

“This **EXPERIENCE** made me **REALIZE** how **IMPORTANT** it is to fully **PREPARE** for a **TRIP** — regardless the **WEATHER** conditions, which can **CHANGE** in an **INSTANT.**”

GET INTO GEAR

Be realistic about the distance you can cover in a day. Use the easy, online **TRIPS** tool today!

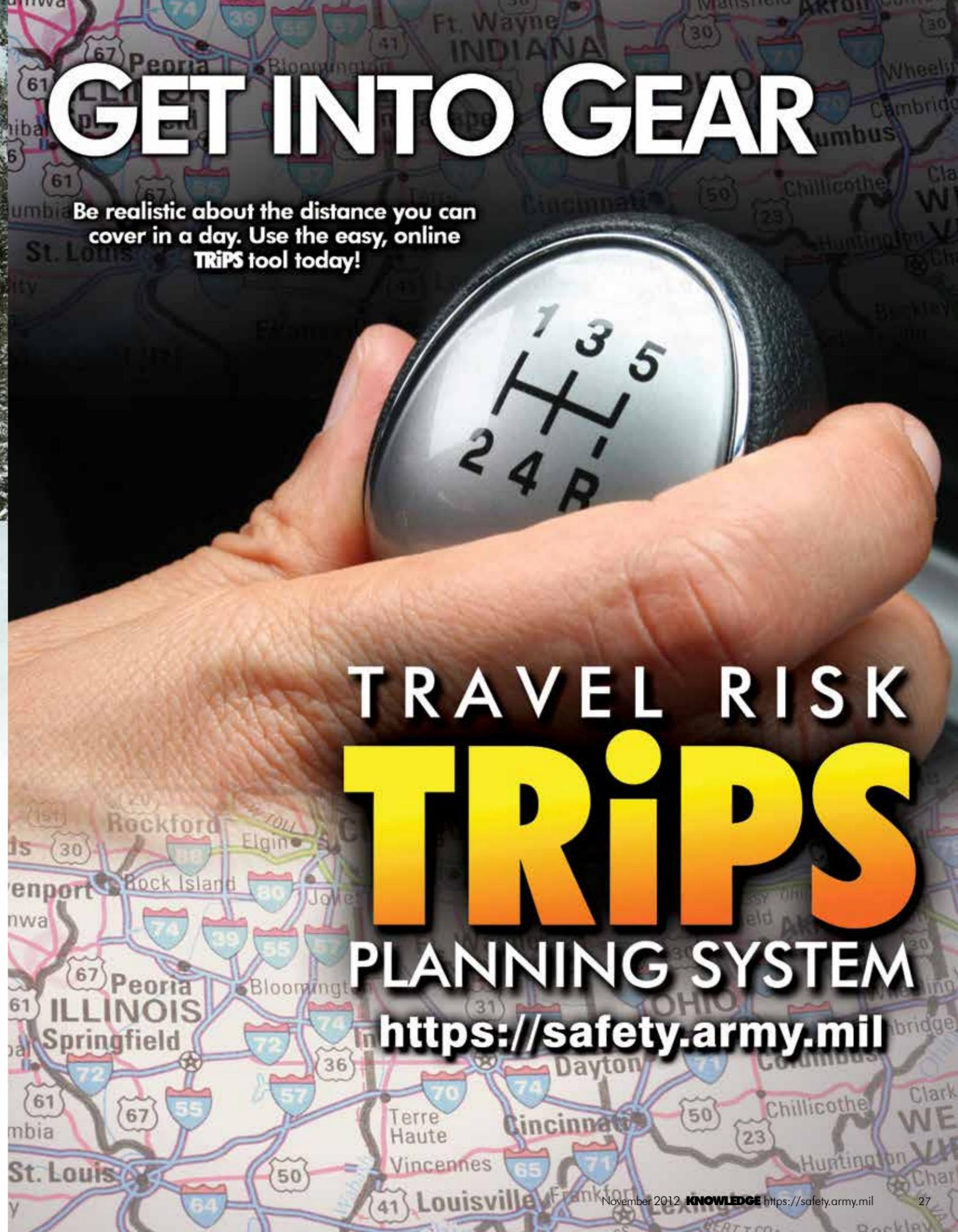


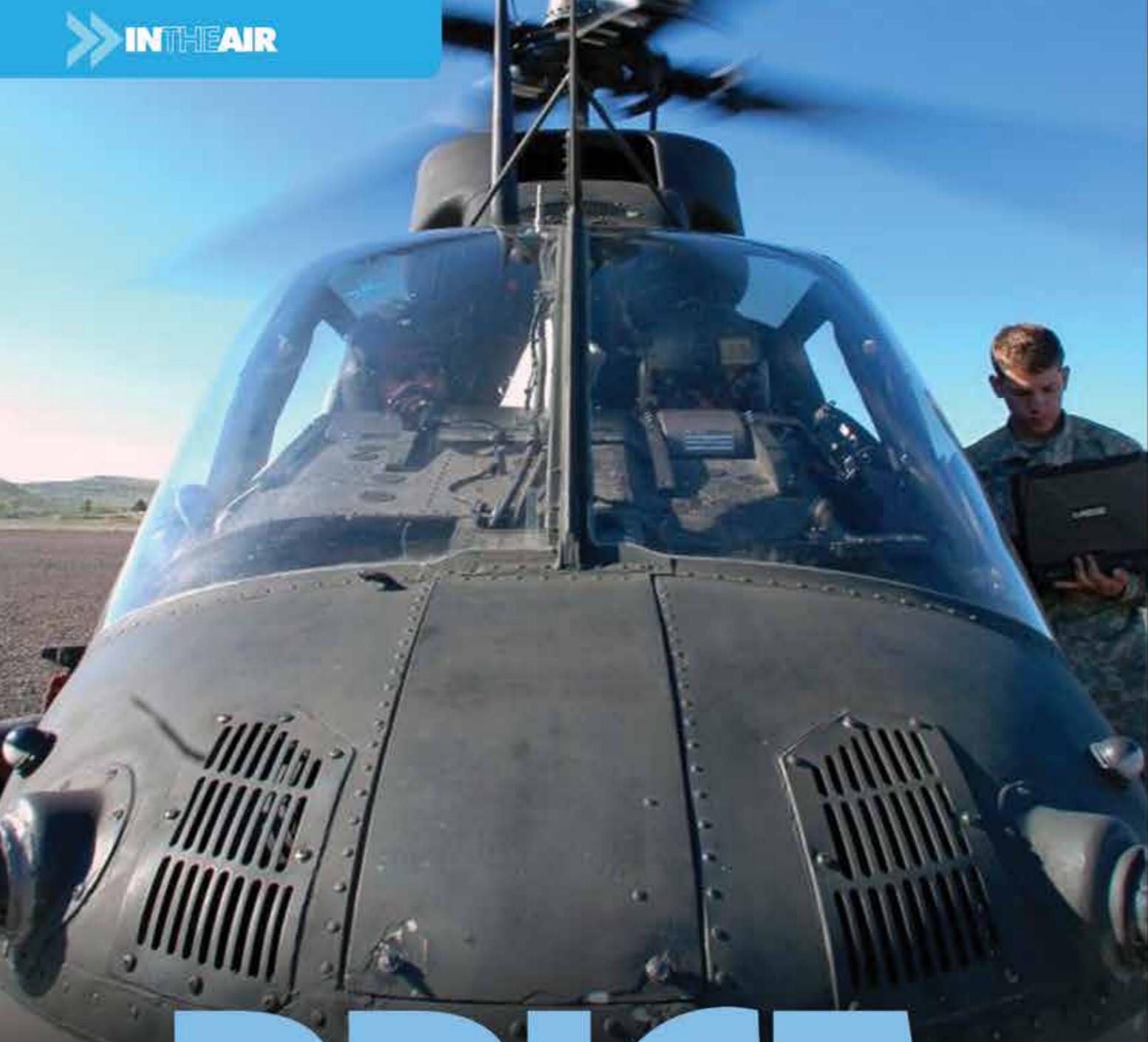
TRAVEL RISK

TRIPS

PLANNING SYSTEM

<https://safety.army.mil>





The day started like any other. Little did I know that soon I'd come dangerously close to killing two of my friends.

My unit was in the fifth month of a yearlong deployment to Afghanistan and I had started to become complacent about the pre-flight checklist. It was about 2 a.m. and I was sitting in the right seat of the trail OH-58D. Both we and the lead Kiowa had just finished our test fire at the range and were heading out to conduct a security mission.

About two minutes after calling ourselves off the range with air traffic control, I switched from the .50-caliber machine gun to rockets. I immediately got a "WEAPON NOT ARMED" advisory message on my multifunction display. I said to the other crewmember, "What the !@#\$?" and looked down at the armament control panel. As I did, the aircraft — without any input from me — fired a rocket. I looked up just in time to see it pass under the lead Kiowa, impacting the ground about 50 meters ahead and to the left of it. I immediately safed the system

and we began to troubleshoot. We discovered that the weapons fire switch had stuck in the down position, so I transferred the controls and pried the switch into the up position. We then returned to the airfield and got another aircraft. In the following weeks, I learned that six other crews had experienced the same malfunction. Fortunately, none of these resulted in anyone being killed or injured. For me, however, this was a valuable opportunity to gain some important lessons learned.

First, if you don't check something during preflight, you can expect it to fail at some point. I'd never bothered to look at the weapons fire switch prior to flying. We routinely flew with the system armed — the only safety being the pilot's thumb. However, one of the first things in the preflight checklist is to make sure the weapon systems are safe. While not necessarily spelled out, it is obvious making sure the trigger isn't pulled should be high on the list of things checked. As I discovered from experience, you want to make sure your weapons systems are properly safed.

The second — and perhaps the most critical — factor was that I'd become complacent. We'd been doing the same things for the past five months, so I was basically on

autopilot. I'd become used to a routine of showing up at the same time, doing the same things and going home at the same time. Because nothing bad or out of the ordinary had happened up to that point, I'd assumed nothing would. As a result, I let down my guard.

Finally — and I think this is related to complacency — I'd become overconfident. I was sure I could handle anything that might happen.

As you can see, not following procedures, coupled with complacency and overconfidence, almost led me to kill two of my co-workers and friends. That's a price I couldn't live with — a price too great to pay.◀

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 PATRICK N. BAKER
1st Infantry Division, Combat Aviation Brigade
Fort Riley, Kan.

a **PRICE** too Great to **PAY**



They WATCH What You Do

WILLIAM GIBSON
First Army Division West
Fort Hood, Texas

It was two weeks before Christmas, and I'd decided to put up lights on the outside of our house. My wife had been telling me to do it for over a month, but, always the procrastinator, I naturally put it off until the last minute.

When I started my decorating endeavor, it was overcast, cold and windy and had been raining and sleeting all day. Talk about a perfect day for working outside on a ladder ... not! I meticulously tested the lights, hooking them together and stretching the strands across the yard parallel to the house. I then leaned the ladder against the house and climbed up. In an effort to expedite my chore, I had my 14-year-old son hold the lights — not the ladder — for me. Like I always say, "Safety first!" As I went up

and down the ladder hanging the first strand, I realized this was going to take forever. That's when I discovered a trick called ladder hopping. (Before you judge me too harshly, just think of the silly stuff you have done and the fact that most of us have done something, shall we say, "risky.")

So here's how ladder hopping works. First, you rock the ladder away from the house by leaning back, just enough to balance it. Once balanced, you hop the ladder to the left or right, depending on the direction you want to go. If you don't lean away from the house far enough before hopping, you'll scrape your knuckles against the house. Not only is this unsafe, it hurts.

The first time I did it, I thought this is pretty cool. I told my son that at this pace, we'd be finished in no time.

"I don't know, Dad. Are you sure you're coordinated enough to do that?" he asked.

"Ha! I laugh in the face of danger," I replied.

The challenge had been set and the gauntlet thrown. I couldn't let him think I wasn't capable of ladder hopping, could I?

"I've got this," I said. "Just step back and watch the master."

Since ladder hopping isn't an Olympic sport, I figured there was no defined personal protective equipment and decided against wearing my son's old junior high school football helmet or my daughter's bicycle helmet. Besides, how much time would I waste grabbing some PPE?

All was going well until I came to a rose bush. It wasn't a big bush, and I was sure I could just bounce once backward, twice to the left and then once forward and I'd be back in position to hang the next strand of lights. Boy, was I wrong!

The last thing I remember was attempting the back hop. As I did, my feet went backward — as in

off the ladder — but the bottom of the ladder didn't move. At that moment, I realized gravity really is a law. Since my hands were on the sides of the ladder instead of on the rung, I couldn't break my fall. My chin immediately hit the top rung and my head snapped back just as my feet swung back toward the ladder. My left foot went between two rungs up to my knee and my right leg missed the ladder completely. The ladder swayed for a few seconds before falling backward, with me still attached, into a large puddle of icy, muddy water.

Fortunately, I wasn't hurt badly, but my pride was bruised. As I sat there in the puddle, I looked at my son and said with as straight a face as possible, "Well, I hope you learned a valuable lesson here."

"Dad, trust me, I will never try that," he said. "But what are you going to tell mom?"

"Nothing," I replied. "We'll keep this learning moment between us."

I learned a valuable, albeit painful, lesson that day. Those around you — children, Soldiers, co-workers — not only hear what you say, they also watch what you do. You set the standard. Take the time to use some risk management before attempting something potentially dangerous. You never know who is watching. Plus, it's just the right thing to do.◀

I learned a **VALUABLE**, albeit painful, **LESSON** that day. Those **AROUND** you — children, Soldiers, co-workers — not only **HEAR** what you **SAY**, they also **WATCH** what you **DO**. You **SET** the **STANDARD**.

My Worst Fear

GUNNERY SGT. PEDRO VILLARREAL
Uniformed Service University of the Health Sciences
Bethesda, Md.

I grew up poor, so most of the vehicles my family owned were small and only seated up to four passengers. Some might not see that as a problem, but for our family of seven, it was always an issue. It wasn't uncommon for all of us to cram into the car for a trip to the store. And since we were packed in so tightly, we never wore our seat belts. Therefore, I always thought it was normal not to wear one.

This way of thinking held true until October 1993. I was a junior in high school and in the process of joining the Marine Corps. My family and I had just returned from a vacation to Mexico, and the following day was the last of the school year. The next morning, my mother said I could stay home since we were all still so tired from our drive back from Mexico. However, I told her I felt fine and went on to school.

A Marine Corps recruiter picked me up from school that afternoon so I could take care of some traffic tickets. Once we were finished at the county clerk's office, we started making our way back to

my house. A few miles from our exit, traffic began to back up on the interstate and state troopers were diverting vehicles onto a feeder road. I didn't think much of it, and the recruiter and I started talking about what kind of accident could be causing the tie-up. As we neared the accident scene, I saw my sister's damaged truck on the side of the road. I told the recruiter to stop, jumped out of his car and ran to the truck.

The ambulances had already left the scene by this time, so I didn't know who had been in the truck. I eventually found my sister crying on the side of the road and asked her what had happened, but

all I could understand her saying was, "Mom!" I was confused and not sure what was happening. A state trooper asked me to go get my father, so I left to find him. I returned to the scene only to discover my dad was already there. I ran to him and asked where my mom was, but he didn't answer. As I glanced back toward my sister's truck, I could see there was a sheet covering a body on the interstate. I wanted to know who was under that sheet. My dad then confirmed my worst fear, telling me that my mom was no longer with us.

My sister drove a 1980's model Chevrolet Silverado that only

DID YOU KNOW?

Seat belt use continues to increase and averages 88 percent nationally. However, there are still groups less likely to wear their seat belts, including teens, commercial drivers, males in rural areas, pickup truck drivers, people driving at night and people who have been drinking.

Seat belts are the single most effective traffic safety

device for preventing death and injury, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Wearing a seat belt can reduce the risk of crash injuries by 50 percent. What's more:

- Seat belts saved more than 75,000 lives from 2004 to 2008.
- Forty-two percent of passenger vehicle

occupants killed in 2007 were unbelted. A 2009 NHTSA study estimates more than 1,600 lives could be saved and 22,000 injuries prevented if seat belt use was 90 percent in every state.

Source: National Safety Council

seated three passengers. I later found out that my 4-year-old brother, 8-year-old sister, 2-year-old nephew and my mother had all been riding with my sister. None of the younger kids was in a car seat and no one was wearing a seat belt. When my sister lost control of the truck, my mom was ejected and landed on the interstate.

To lose a loved one always hurts. But to lose the person who gave birth to you and did everything in their power to ensure you were always taken care of hurts the most. Since

“ Since that day, I **HAVE** always **WORN** my **SEAT BELT** and make sure **ANYONE** riding with me **DOES** the **SAME**. I never want my **CHILDREN** to know the feeling of **LOSING** a **PARENT** at such a **YOUNG** age. ”

that day, I have always worn my seat belt and made sure anyone riding with me does the same. I never want my children to know the feeling of losing a parent at such a young age. Seat belts save lives ... but they only work if you wear them.◀



The discipline to click that seat belt ...

YOU have it, but does your battle buddy?



The signs are all around. It's up to YOU to recognize and act on them.



U.S. ARMY
ARMY STRONG



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER
<https://safety.army.mil>

When the Needles

Early May in central Alaska is a beautiful time of year. The mountainous landscapes, longer periods of daylight and warmer temperatures are truly a sight to behold. However, that's assuming you've got good weather.

I was preparing for my instrument flight evaluation as part of my annual proficiency and readiness test. On this day, I would be flying from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, to Fort Greeley with the company standardization pilot/instrument examiner. The weather forecast was great for both the departure and arrival airfields. However, the SP/IE and I could expect to be flying in instrument meteorological conditions for almost the entire en route portion of the flight. Due to the limited instrument flight rule route structure in central Alaska, we had both flown this route numerous times. We expected an easy instrument flight evaluation. Little did we know what was in store for us.

With the oral evaluation and preflight complete, we departed Ladd Army Airfield IFR, headed toward Fort Greeley. Departing to the south was uneventful and actually pleasant. The atmosphere in the cockpit was relaxed,

a feeling I have learned to temper with added vigilance. The UH-60A we were flying was one of the oldest in the fleet at that time. Having recently been moved from Korea to Alaska, there was no doubt this airframe had some time on it.

Halfway to Fort Greeley, established on the Victor airway at 4,000 feet and in the clouds, I noticed something strange with my attitude indicator. It began rocking left and right and then started to spin very quickly. I announced this to the crew, then looked cross cockpit and saw the same thing happening on the co-pilot's side. Next, I noticed a problem with my horizontal situation indicator. All the needles were spinning. Every second the indicator needle swung 180 degrees,

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 JOSHUA SNOW
B Company, 15th Military Intelligence Battalion,
500th Military Intelligence Brigade
Fort Hood, Texas

stopped and then returned to the present heading. As I announced this, the same situation was also occurring on the other side of the cockpit. The seasoned warrant officer SP/IE, who had more than 4,000 hours, told me he had the controls. He said I was doing fine and we would have to put into practice our flying partial panel training. He then told me to contact air traffic control, advise them of our situation and request radar vectors to the precision approach radar at Fort Greeley, where we would land. We followed the vectors to the PAR, executed the approach and landed safely. Later, a maintenance test pilot conducting the post-flight inspection found a loose cannon plug on the command instrument processor. That is what caused the gyros to spin out of control.

Lessons Learned

We practice partial panel flying in the flight simulator, but it can be unsettling when you unexpectedly encounter it during flight. Flying without an attitude indicator can be challenging. Flying without a horizontal situation indicator can also be challenging. Flying

without both is my idea of a bad day. Using the standby magnetic compass requires skills we, arguably, all need to review. What is the magnetic variation on your path of flight? Do you add it to your magnetic course or subtract it for your direction of travel? Did your flight planning include the true course and magnetic course on your navigation log?

Fortunately, I was a young warrant officer on my second instrument flight evaluation thus far in my career, so I completed my navigation log with great attention to detail. But it shouldn't take an evaluation to force us into our most thorough work through of a problem. I attribute the safe outcome to the SP/IE that day. I learned a valuable lesson about complacency. Even if you've memorized Chapters 5 (operating limits and restrictions) and 9 (emergency procedures) of the -10, there are still malfunctions that can endanger an unprepared crew.

Finally, always be prepared with the right publications. As professional aviators, we should always have current aircraft pubs with us, no matter the training situation. Knowing what to do and how to do it can make all the difference when the needles spin.◀

It Won't Happen to Me

Most of us probably don't give much thought to slip, trip and fall hazards, but they pose a danger as we go about our daily routines. Perhaps you've seen someone at a store stretching for an item on the top shelf that's just out of reach. The next thing you hear is a loud crash.



JOHN BOUTIN
Watervliet Arsenal Safety Office
Watervliet, N.Y.

DID YOU KNOW?

In fiscal 2011, Department of the Army Civilian slip, trip and fall accidents cost the Army \$47,860,176. From fiscal 2006 through 2011, there were seven reported Class A slip, trip and fall accidents involving Soldiers. Of those, three resulted in fatal injuries. For information on workplace hazards and how to reduce the risk of work-related injuries, visit <https://safety.army.mil/soh/INDUSTRIALSAFETY/tabid/369/Default.aspx>.

That person just fell and landed on his back with the shelving unit on top of him. Not only did he hurt himself, he injured several other shoppers as well. It's no laughing matter when folks refuse to take the time to ask for help. While this scenario is hypothetical, I think most of you can relate. Here's an actual incident I witnessed firsthand:

One night, I heard a commotion outside my house. When I went to investigate, I saw my neighbor's father-in-law lying on the ground and rushed to help him. It didn't take long to realize that he'd been drinking and tripped on the sidewalk leading to my neighbor's house. With its uneven sections of concrete, that sidewalk was an accident waiting to happen. And even though the father-in-law had walked that path hundreds of times before without incident, the combination of factors that night weren't in his favor. Fortunately, he wasn't seriously injured.

On a different occasion, I watched another neighbor

almost become a slip, trip and fall victim. This time it was winter and there was ice and snow on the ground. All the neighbors had cleared off the sidewalks in front of their homes except this woman. When she came out of her house, she went for a ride, sliding down her sidewalk. She was lucky and didn't fall. However, if she would've just taken the time to clear her walkway, she probably wouldn't have had a close call.

I believe most people have an "it-won't-happen-to-me" mindset when it comes to slips, trips and falls. The potential for these types of accidents around the house are avoidable if individuals take the time to identify and fix hazards. The same goes for the workplace. Soldiers, Civilians, supervisors and subordinates alike should be cognizant of their surroundings and take ownership of their personal safety.◀



Eyes Wide Shut

STEVEN T. SMITH
Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center
Fort Hood, Texas

How many times have you sat bleary-eyed behind the wheel and tried to convince yourself you weren't too tired to drive? I admit that I have been guilty of driving fatigued. But I learned, thankfully without being hurt, that pushing the body too far just to make up some time could result in paying a price you are unwilling to accept.

The college semester was coming to a close, final exams were staring me in the face and I was looking for engineering internship opportunities to gain some real-world experience. A human resources representative at one company where I'd applied contacted me, saying that the engineering manager wanted to interview me in person at the job site. The site was a two-hour drive away, and I set up the interview for the next Monday.

Monday arrived and I got into my car to head for the interview. As luck would have it, I began to have car troubles and quickly determined I wasn't going to make it to the interview. I called the engineering manager to inform him about my situation, fearing this job opportunity was now closed. Fortunately, he understood my circumstances and gave me a last-chance interview for 9 a.m. Thursday, as I had exams and other obligations Tuesday and Wednesday.

After working all day Tuesday, I stayed up all night studying due to anxiety and a general lack of prior preparation. I passed my exams while fighting the haze of fatigue and returned to my room eager to relax and get some rest. What I found was my friends wanting to celebrate the end of another semester. I caved to the pressure and reluctantly headed out with them.

After another sleep-deprived night, I was on the road for my interview by 6:30 the next morning. Thanks to a good local mechanic, my car was roadworthy and didn't give me any problems this time. Fueled by adrenaline and even more caffeine, I arrived at the interview with enough spare time to gather my thoughts and make sure I looked my best.

The interview went very well, with the end result being an internship position offer. Extremely excited, I was not thinking about the extreme lack of sleep I had over the past 48 hours, the two-hour drive home or even that my eyes did not want to stay focused. I just wanted to get back, celebrate the good news and get some well-deserved and overdue rest. I mean, it was only a two-hour drive and it was still daylight.

Why pay for a hotel room or nap at a rest stop when my own bed was just a short drive away? I could make it with no problems, right?

The fatigue caught up with me quickly as the adrenaline wore off, but I was too stubborn to pull off the road and take a rest. I tried all the home remedies to stay awake, but no amount of caffeine, blasts of hot and cold air, singing or snacking could help by this point. I remember jerking awake several times on the highway, often straddling lanes. However, there was one event that made me rethink my driving habits — one very large, potentially life-ending "near miss."

I awoke to the sound of a truck horn. I immediately noticed my car drifting on the left shoulder toward an oncoming concrete barricade and guardrail for an overpass. I reacted by hitting my brakes, jerking the steering wheel away from the barrier — missing it by about 12 inches at most — and coming to a stop on the right-hand shoulder at the end of the overpass.

Given the situation, several things could have happened:

- I could have struck the concrete barrier headfirst. Yes, I was wearing a seat belt — at

KNOW THE SIGNS

According to AAA, there are several warning signs to drowsy driving, including:

- The inability to recall the last few miles traveled
- Having disconnected or wandering thoughts
- Having difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open
- Feeling as though your head is very heavy
- Drifting out of your driving lane, perhaps driving on the rumble strips
- Yawning repeatedly
- Accidentally tailgating other vehicles
- Missing traffic signs

least I did something right — but the human body does not handle head-on collisions at highway speeds very well.

- I could have lost control of my vehicle when I overcorrected. This might have led to flipping my car, hitting the guardrail or falling off the overpass onto the road and traffic underneath.
- I could have struck the 18-wheeler traveling in the right-hand lane, whose driver was attentive enough to warn and wake me up. The driver had stepped on his brakes when he saw me heading toward the barrier in preparation for an accident. If he had maintained speed, I would have turned into him when I jerked my wheel and hit my brakes. The laws of physics would give the advantage to the 18-wheeler over my small car.

I was extremely lucky that day. I was not fit to drive and should have been subjected to the consequences of that action. Thankfully, I was not. After this narrow escape, I slowly made my way back home, turning the normally two-hour drive into a full-day affair due to rest stops and naps.

As Soldiers and Civilians, the Army is focused on maintaining

our combat readiness by not only ensuring health and safety while on-duty, but providing guidance for off-duty activities as well.

We should be prepared for the responsibilities and consequences of our individual actions at all times. This includes considering whom our decisions will impact, whether that is a significant other, family or friends. I believe this to be one of the best determining factors when making decisions about risk. Imagine your family and friends learning you died in a POV accident that could have been prevented by delaying the trip to get adequate sleep or taking rest breaks during the drive. Saving a few minutes now is never worth the loss of time with loved ones later.◀◀



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Stay Connected to Safety

Check out the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's Facebook page for the most recent news stories, videos, photos, reminders, alerts and announcements by the Army's premier safety professionals.

DID YOU KNOW?

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year, resulting in an estimated 1,500 deaths, 71,000 injuries and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses.

Source: AAA

Join the USACR/Safety Center community on Facebook. Also, don't forget to connect with Army safety at these sites:



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



CLASS A

The aircraft crashed during landing after contacting a tree. The aircraft sustained significant damage after overturning on its right side and coming to rest inverted, compromising the rotor mast.



CLASS A

A Soldier was killed when he was struck in the head by a tree branch knocked loose by the aircraft's rotor wash while he was videoing/photographing hoist training.



CLASS B

The crew experienced a rotor droop condition upon accelerating out of a refueling area. The aircraft impacted ground barriers and sustained damage to the nose area. Three crewmembers suffered minor injuries.



CLASS B

The crew was running up the engine for flight when, upon advancing from the detent, the

system locked into lockout mode and caused both engines to overspeed by 120 percent for more than 12 seconds.



CLASS C

An uncommanded turret movement during ground taxi for takeoff caused the 30 mm gun mount and turret to be damaged when they became tangled with netting on the ramp.



CLASS C

The aircraft experienced mast overtorque of 131 percent for four seconds during an annual proficiency and readiness test simulated engine failure. Subsequently, the engine experienced an overtorque of 136 percent for two seconds, and the NG exceeded normal limits by 108 percent.



CLASS C

A lightning strike caused instrument failures. The aircraft landed without incident.



CLASS A

The system was destroyed when it contacted mountainous terrain during controlled descent to land.

The system launched normally but began an uncommanded descent from 300 feet above ground level and crashed one mile from



the runway. The system and payload were recovered with damage.

The crew received an Engine Low Oil pressure indication and executed return to base procedures for landing. The engine seized while the vehicle was descending, causing the system to touch down nose-low and collapse the landing gear. The UAS's airframe and payload sensors were damaged.

CLASS B

Two UASs collided while in operation on the active runway of an uncontrolled airfield. One system was just moving out for takeoff as the other had touched down.



CLASS C

The contact crew experienced 50-knot winds during climb out and elected to program the system to return for landing. During descent, the system struck a T-wall 200 feet short of the runway and sheared off the landing gear.



CLASS A

A Soldier died after he was pinned between a GSA bus and a light medium tactical vehicle.

Personnel Injury

CLASS C

A Soldier was injured when he shot himself in the hand as he attempted to clear a round from a 10 mm pistol.

DRIVING



CLASS A

A Soldier and his passenger were killed when their vehicle collided with another vehicle. The occupants of the other vehicle were injured. Seat belt use is unknown.

A Soldier died after his POV collided head-on with another vehicle in inclement weather conditions. The driver of the other vehicle was also killed.

A Soldier was killed when she lost control of her vehicle and it overturned.

A Soldier was killed in a single-vehicle crash while en route to his battle drill location.

Two Soldiers were killed when their vehicle crossed the median in heavy rain and collided with oncoming traffic. Both Soldiers were wearing their seat belts.

A Soldier died after her vehicle hydroplaned and struck a roadside barrier.



A Soldier was killed when he was struck by a vehicle while running during personal physical training.



CLASS A

A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle in a hairpin turn and crashed. The Soldier was wearing a helmet.

A Soldier died after his motorcycle struck the rear of an ambulance that crossed in front of his path en route to an emergency call.

A Soldier was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle and crashed. The Soldier, who was wearing a helmet, was licensed and had met motorcycle training requirements.

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