



THIS MONTH APRIL 2016



Fish or Cut Bait

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 IAN F. MILLS
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Clearwater, Florida

If you're not familiar with estuary wade fishing, it's hard to explain the allure of hunting fish on foot. I normally go after the big three — speckled sea trout, redfish and flounder. What makes this kind of fishing fun is you never know what you're going to get. The rare 3- to 4-foot-long shark will occasionally appear, but usually not until later in the season.

I'd planned ahead for my day on Christmas Bay. I'd assembled my fishing tackle, including my stringer, which is a long thin rope I'd run between the fishes' gills

and mouth to keep them from escaping. I'd also checked the weather and it was perfect for fishing. A strong early morning tide promised a successful catch.

I got to the bay at 4:30 a.m. It was a couple of hours before sunrise and I needed to hurry to catch the rising tide. The waters were still a bit chilly, so I donned my neoprene waders to help ward off the cold. As I gathered my equipment, I realized the quick-release clasp on my stringer was missing. No problem; I'd improvise by looping the stringer through my belt several times.

I looked at the familiar reference lights across the bay to help guide me as I entered the water. As I did, I began the "bay shuffle"— a technique to keep from stepping on stingrays and getting a tail-barb in your leg or foot. I also wore stingray guards on my legs as an extra precaution.

I'd been fishing about three hours when the sun rose and beautifully silhouetted the coastline. My stringer contained several fish and it was time to walk back. I chose an indirect route so I'd have a fairly hard bottom for easy walking. I was about 300

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yards from the shore and could see my truck in the distance. The high tide had entered the bay and the water was a little over waist deep.

As I was walking, the water behind me suddenly exploded. I turned around and saw the fish on my stringer struggling against something. I immediately grabbed the stringer and began pulling it

enough to protect me from the sharks. To get there, however, I had to swim across a much-deeper small-boat channel marked off by metal pipes. Were I to have a chance, I had to get rid of the day's catch. Keeping an eye on my pursuers as best I could, I finally freed myself of the stringer. The sharks closed in and blood surrounded a group of fish

"A quick check of the water around me revealed I wasn't alone. I counted one ... two ... three ... four shark fins circling me!"

toward me. Big mistake! The largest speckled trout was nearly gone, completely bitten off behind the head. A quick check of the water around me revealed I wasn't alone. I counted one ... two ... three ... four shark fins circling me!

I struggled to remove the stringer from my belt as I headed for shallower water about 100 yards away. The sharks kept following and circling me as they attacked the fish on my stringer. With each subsequent attack, the tugs got stronger and more aggressive. The largest shark was about 4 feet long — a formidable-sized predator, especially when part of a group. He began testing me as prey, swimming within an arm's length. Using the handle of my fishing rod, I lunged toward the shark and struck a single blow just behind the gills. The shark's sleek shape slapped the water in front of me as he knocked my hand to one side.

The water where I was headed was about 2 feet deep — shallow

that would never make it to my table.

I began swimming across the channel. For the first time I noticed my heart pounding in my chest and the adrenaline in my system. Each stroke brought me closer to safety as the sharks, occupied by their fish-on-a-rope dinner, fell farther behind.

When I got back to the shore and my truck, I inventoried my equipment. Although I'd managed to save my fishing rod, I'd donated several fish, a stringer line, a box of tackle and my lucky fishing hat to the sharks. Fortunately, I still had the most important thing — my life — and took away some important lessons learned. I'll share those with you.

- Complacency can injure or kill you by blinding you to hazards. Not realizing how adaptable various species can be, I didn't expect to see any sharks that day. I'd overlooked the first two steps of risk management — identifying and assessing the hazards.

- Use the buddy system during

off-duty activities. I'd fished alone in this spot on countless occasions. However, it only took getting into trouble once for me to appreciate the value of having someone else to cover my back.

- Check your equipment to ensure you have everything you need and that it's functioning properly. Don't ignore the small stuff because you think it's unimportant. My stringer's missing quick-release clasp became very important when those sharks began attacking my fish.

- Contingency planning can help you survive unexpected, dangerous situations. The key is planning before getting into trouble. This is step three of risk management, developing controls and making decisions. The alternative is trying to come up with a plan after trouble starts. This is typically called panic.

Finally, don't ever quit what you love doing during your free time. Instead, assess the risks before and during your activities and, afterward, think about how well you planned for them. Chances are you've already survived many dangerous situations just executing your combat missions. Why let complacency or indiscipline make you the victim of an avoidable off-duty accident? It goes without saying that you have a responsibility to your unit, family and friends to not let that happen.

Enjoy doing the things you love this summer by doing them safely. And if you want to try out wade fishing, I'll be looking for you on the bay! ■

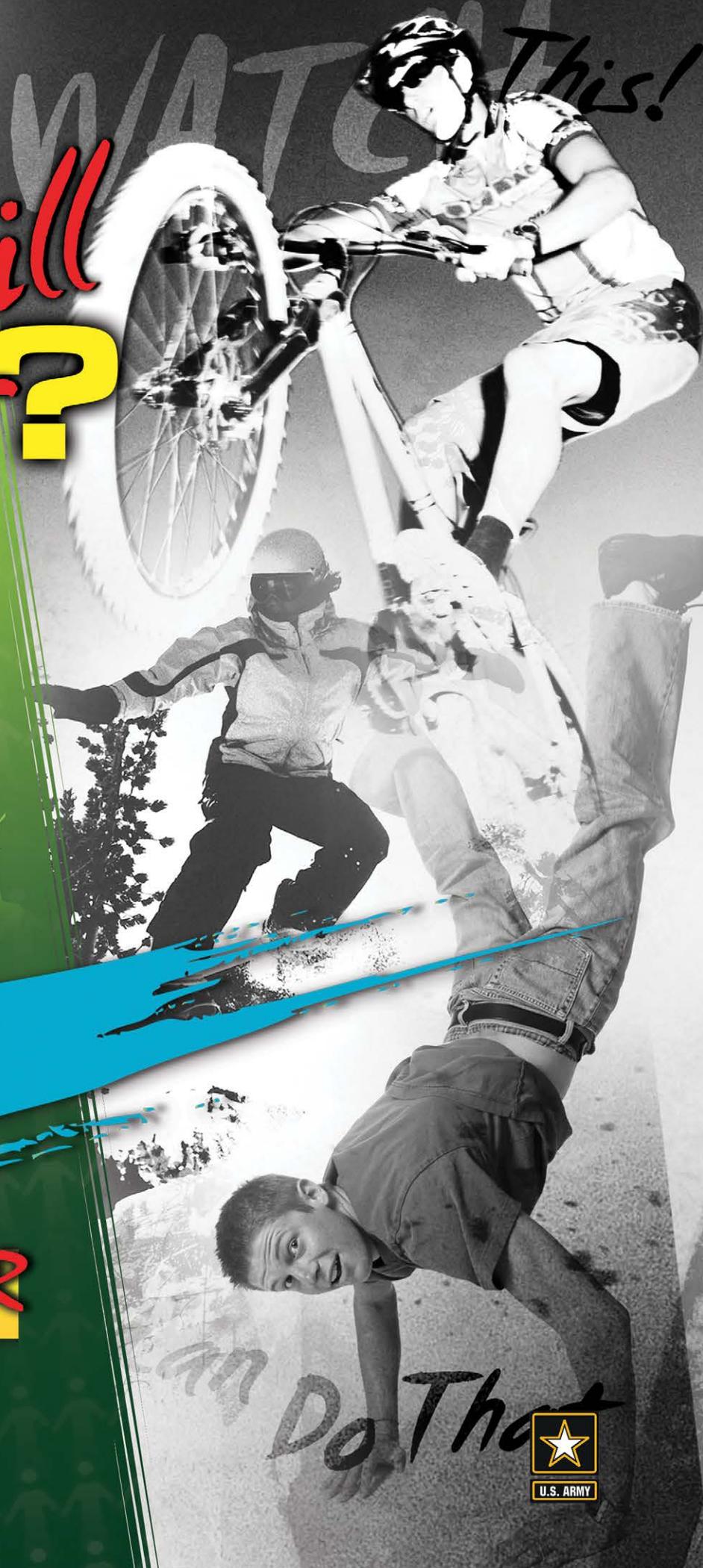
ARE YOU The Thrill Seeker?

IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS
AND DETERMINE
IF YOU OR YOUR
FRIENDS ARE AT RISK

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SAFETY FACTOR

Check out your local Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers meeting to learn how you can see the BOSS Safety Factor



This!

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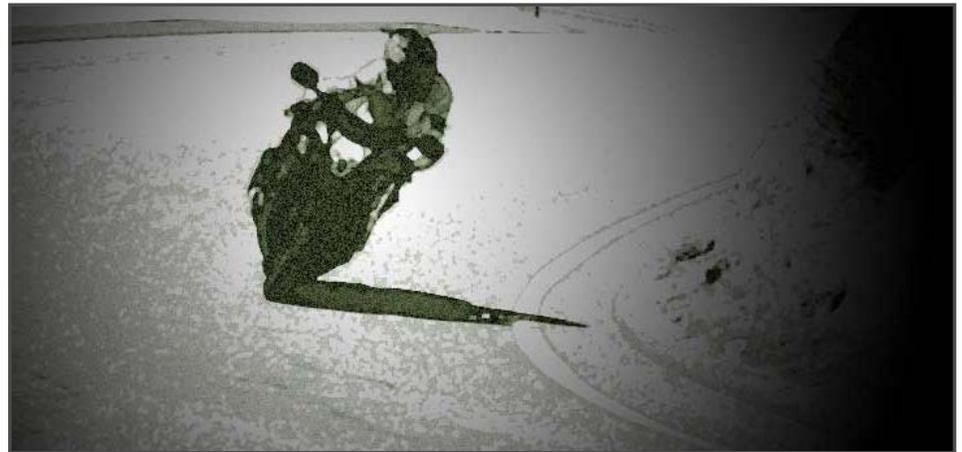
A Senseless Loss

MASTER SGT. EDWARD HUFFINE
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As a brigade sport bike and senior battalion motorcycle mentor, scores of Soldiers have asked me for advice about becoming a motorcyclist. Of these, one Soldier in particular stands out.

It was 2013, and this Soldier asked for my help, so I walked him and his company mentor through the process of becoming a motorcyclist. We assessed that the Soldier had no prior riding experience and recommended he purchase a used mid-level standard/sport motorcycle in the 300-500cc range to get a feel for riding. We helped him shop for motorcycles, but he didn't purchase one in the following weeks. When asked how things were going, he told us he was still looking.

Three weeks later, after completing the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Basic RiderCourse, the Soldier showed up to work on a Suzuki GSXR1300R Hayabusa. I was immediately concerned and expressed this to the rider, his Motorcycle Mentorship Program mentor and his company commander. Their response was the same — disbelief. We all three counseled the Soldier on our concerns and set up a series of check rides and classes to assess his abilities and teach him



how to be a responsible rider on such a powerful motorcycle.

Over the next five months, we took him on six mentor check rides and he participated in our battalion-level rider survival reaction mitigation and accident avoidance classes. The classes are designed to educate inexperienced riders how to avoid potentially fatal mistakes while riding, how to recover if mistakes are made

term on-post riding pass. We determined this particular Soldier had learned enough to take the ERC within that 180-day period. However, over the course of a month, he twice failed to show up for his scheduled class. On his second no show, I recommended his chain of command counsel him on noncompliance and pull his riding privileges — unless riding with a mentor or to the

“We followed up those classes with a mentor ride to show the riders what was taught in the classroom and how to apply it to the road.”

and the basics of sound decisions while riding in and out of traffic. We followed up those classes with a mentor ride to show the riders what was taught in the classroom and how to apply it to the road.

At the time, III Corps policy required BRC-qualified riders take the MSF's Experienced RiderCourse within 180 days to receive a long-

ERC — until he completed the course. The counseling further explained the benefits of the ERC and how it helps to progress riders through the MMP and make them better motorcyclists.

About three and a half weeks after the Soldier received his riding privilege revocation and counseling, he decided to ride



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his motorcycle from Fort Hood to a family sporting event in San Antonio. Along the way, the Soldier's actions while riding resulted in his death.

Some lessons learned from this Soldier's senseless death include:

- Even if you follow the MMP to the letter, a fatality may still occur; but we still must follow the program with due diligence to ensure compliance.
- Despite the outcome described in this article, guiding and educating a Soldier through the purchasing process is the best policy.
- Tracking Soldiers' progress through the MMP with check rides, classes and counseling affords them

the best opportunity to becoming safe and experienced riders.

- Having non-riding leaders involved in the MMP is a proven best practice to ensure Soldiers know their leaders are involved and care about them.

This experience made me rethink how I educate young, inexperienced riders before they purchase a motorcycle. I use this example as a teaching tool and explain how inherently dangerous motorcycling is — even in the best conditions. Losing even one Soldier in a motorcycle accident is tragic. In fiscal 2015, we lost 26 Soldiers to PMV-2 accidents, with a large majority (90 percent) being sport motorcycles. As of Mar. 10, 2016, we

had 11 PMV-2 fatalities compared to three fatalities for the same time frame in fiscal 2015. This is a disturbing trend that should make us look at what we need to improve on to lower motorcycle accidents.

In closing, first-line and company-level leaders need to be involved and informed about their Soldiers activities and especially motorcycle mentorship. The responsibility of motorcycle mentorship does not fall only on the motorcycle mentor, but with all leadership at every level. Engaged leaders will, in my opinion, help save lives. ■

ARE YOU READY?

ARAP
ARMY READINESS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

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

<https://safety.army.mil>

RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

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

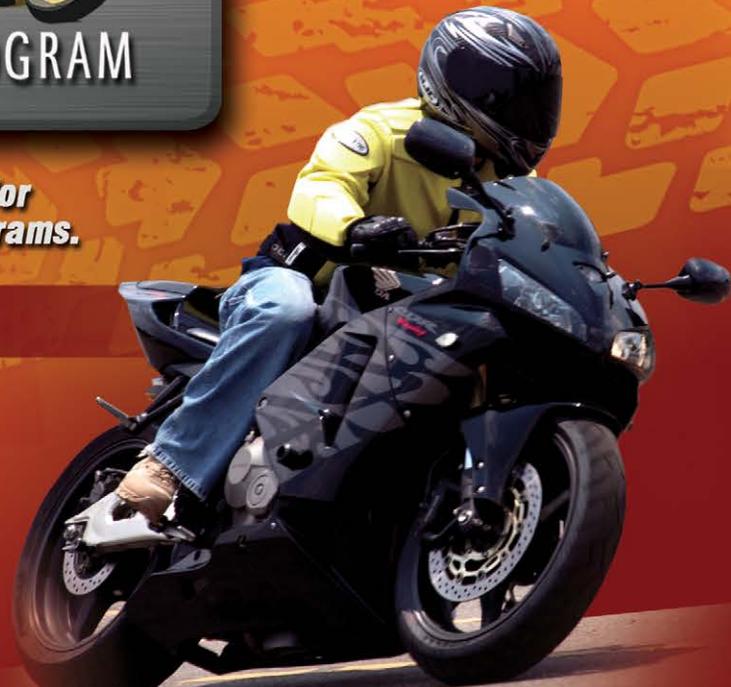


MMP

MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the USACRC MMP website for some examples of active mentoring programs.

<https://safety.army.mil>





Light the Way

In January 2014, 6-17 Cavalry deployed to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin to conduct a force-on-force training exercise. When we arrived, and before the rotation started, my troop received all required training such as environmental and dust qualification. Since this NTC rotation was a force-on-force exercise, it would require our squadron/troop to operate in tactical assembly areas out in the field rather than AT hard-stand structures normally found in the asymmetrical warfare rotations.

When we prepared to move to a new TAA, all the right procedures seemed to be in place. We performed a map and photo recon of the new area. Quartering parties also went ahead of the main body to confirm the suitability and surface conditions of the new TAA to facilitate operations of a squadron of Kiowa Warriors.

During the daytime, everything from the parking plan to the forward area refueling point was sufficient, but the real learning point was during night operations. Throughout our rotation, we were operating under low illumination conditions. Anyone who has flown in these conditions at NTC knows there are areas of low contrast that make it hard to distinguish reference points during takeoffs and landings due to that low illumination, NVG scintillation, instrumentation glare on the windscreen and brownouts.

During the first few night operations, we quickly learned that since we were not landing on an improved surface, we needed to

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put chem lights on each landing point for aircraft parking and for using the FARP. We ensured the chem lights were secured to a fixed object or the ground so they could not roll under rotor wash and give the illusion that the helicopter was

within parking areas or FARPs, the pilots could possibly mistake one landing light array for another and become spatially disoriented under brownout conditions, resulting in personal injury/death or damage/destruction of equipment.

“It was important to coordinate with FARP personnel to establish predetermined spots on the FARP pad to place the chem lights.”

drifting, possibly causing the pilot to fixate on the rolling chem light and follow it into an obstacle.

It was important to coordinate with FARP personnel to establish predetermined spots on the FARP pad to place the chem lights. During dust landings, this allowed the aircrew to maintain situation awareness of all obstacles within the FARP such as grounding rods and drip pans. If there is no standard for a reference light placement

Based on our experiences, I suggest, when possible, the use of infrared beanbag lights or secured IR chem lights within the TAA when operating in areas of low contrast and low illumination. The light is visible through the dust cloud under NVGs and allows the aircrew to keep a good reference throughout the landing when other references are temporarily lost. ■

HERE IT COMES



Overcorrecting often leads to rollovers, the deadliest of vehicle crashes.

How can you prevent it?

Don't panic! Take your foot off the gas, smoothly steer back onto the road and, if you must brake, apply even pressure to the pedal without stomping.

READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their readiness for what lies ahead - both the known and unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?

<https://safety.army.mil>





Losing Sight of Safety

BO JOYNER
Robins Air Force Base, Georgia

It looked like an easy out when the ball left the burly right-hander's bat — a grounder just a step or two to my left. I shifted my feet and got into position, bending my knees and holding my glove close to the ground before I got in front of the bounding softball. The field's surface wasn't even and I saw the ball take two low hops, so I braced for the ball to hit squarely in the pocket of my trusty infielder's glove. I figured I could scoop it up and nail the runner at first, but I didn't get the chance. Instead, the ball hit another rise in the ground and struck me in the face. That's when the lights went out.

The next thing I remember was my teammates and opponents hovering over me. Someone put a wet rag over my left eye and told everyone, "He's all right. The cut's underneath his eye." A couple of my teammates picked up what was left of my glasses and handed the pieces to my wife, who'd raced from the bleachers to the huddle of people gathered around me. She'd been chasing our 2-year-old son and missed hearing the thud when the ball hit my face and knocked me down. (By the way, "softball" is a gross misnomer. Believe me, there was nothing soft about that ball!)

After I shook loose most of the cobwebs, my wife and a friend helped me into our vehicle and we headed to the emergency room. Now, I've been playing softball since I was old enough to hold a bat and suffered my share of twisted ankles, pulled muscles and strawberries. This time, though, I could tell my injury was more serious.

I'd been wearing my prescription



glasses during the game because I've always had poor eyesight. When I opened my swollen left eye during the examination, however, I couldn't see anything. While a CT scan showed

Although that "however" got to me, I went home thinking positive thoughts. Surely, the hyphema will clear up and my sight will come back, I told myself. Unfortunately,

"I'd been wearing my prescription glasses during the game because I've always had poor eyesight."

no broken facial bones or fragments from my glasses in my eye, I wasn't encouraged when the emergency room physician said, "We're going to have to get an ophthalmologist in here to see if we can save your vision."

The ophthalmologist checked me and offered a little more hope. He said, "The front part of your eye is filled with blood (hyphema) right now. When it clears out, your sight might come back completely. However, when the blood clears, it might reveal more damage to the back of your eye."

it didn't turn out that way.

When the blood cleared, the doctors could see my lens was ruptured and my retina, although not detached, was severely damaged. I had an hour-and-a-half operation where an ophthalmologist removed the lens and cleaned out the remaining blood. His best prognosis was that with an implant or contact lens I might get most of my peripheral vision back. Nevertheless, because of the retinal damage, I'd never recover my central vision in that eye.



His prognosis was right on the money. Using a contact lens today, I can see things out of the corner of my left eye, but when I try to look straight at something, it's covered by a black cloud. Even so, I've adjusted pretty well to my situation. Thanks to the overlap of my right eye's field of vision, I lost only about 20 percent of my total vision. My job requires me

to work at a computer all day, so my right eye now tires more quickly than it used to. Fortunately, I can still drive.

There wasn't much I could've done to prevent that ball from hitting me. I didn't see the little rise in the field that lofted the ball into my face. However, while I couldn't have predicted what happened, I could've protected my eyes. Various models

of protective sports eyewear that are shatterproof and can be ground to match your eyewear prescription are available at optometrists' offices. Sure, they're not cheap, but that one-time expense is a lot cheaper than surgery. It's better to spend the money now to protect your eyes than spend it later correcting the damage and still end up like me, partially blind. ■

Protect those Peepers

DAVID TURBERT
American Academy of Ophthalmology

Tens of thousands of sports- and recreation-related eye injuries occur each year. The good news is 90 percent of serious eye injuries are preventable through the use of appropriate protective eyewear. Because the risk of eye injury can vary depending on the activity, make sure the level of protection you or others in your family use is appropriate for the type of activity. That includes those who wear corrective lenses, which do not offer proper eye protection.

High-risk activities

For all age groups, sports-related eye injuries occur most frequently in baseball, basketball and racquet sports. Boxing and full-contact martial arts pose an extremely high risk of serious and even blinding eye injuries. While there is no satisfactory eye protection for boxing, thumbless gloves may reduce the number of eye injuries.

In baseball, ice hockey and men's lacrosse, a helmet with a polycarbonate (an especially strong, shatterproof, lightweight plastic) face mask or wire shield should be worn at all times. It is important that hockey face masks be approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council or the Canadian Standards Association.

Protective eyewear with polycarbonate lenses should be worn for sports such as

basketball, racquet sports, soccer and field hockey. Make sure you choose eye protectors that have been tested to meet American Society of Testing and Materials standards or pass the CSA racquet sports standard.

If you already have reduced vision in one eye, consider the risks of injuring the stronger eye before participating in contact or racquet sports, which pose a higher risk of eye injury. Check with your ophthalmologist to see if

Did You Know?

The American Academy of Ophthalmology has designated April as Sports Eye Safety Month.

appropriate eye protection is available and whether participating in contact or racquet sports is advised.

Other risky leisure activities

While sports account for a particularly high number of eye injuries, they are by no means the only hobby that poses a risk to your sight. According to physicians surveyed for the 2008 Eye Injury Snapshot conducted by the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Ocular Trauma, more than 40 percent of patients treated for eye injuries sustained at home were involved in home

repairs, yard work, cleaning and cooking. Use common sense and err on the side of caution, whatever the activity.

- Consider the risk of flying debris or other objects during activities and wear appropriate eye protection.

- Remember that eyeglasses aren't sufficient protection.

- Be careful during activities or games involving projectiles and other sharp objects that could create injury if in contact with the eye. For example, the U.S. Eye Injury Registry indicates that fishing is the No. 1 cause of sports-related eye injuries.

Conclusion

If an eye injury does occur, see an ophthalmologist or go to the emergency room immediately, even if the injury appears minor. Delaying medical attention can result in permanent vision loss or blindness. For more information about preventing, recognizing and treating eye injuries, visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology's website at <http://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries>.

Editor's note: Reprinted with permission from the American Academy of Ophthalmology.



R U @ Risk?

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It's easy to take for granted the things in our lives we depend on every day and yet give very little thought to. Say the words "distracted driving" and most folks think of teens who text or gab excitedly with each other while navigating the streets. However, teens aren't the only ones out there paying less than full attention to the road. Distracted driving can just as easily happen to anyone — maybe even you.

According to information at www.distraction.gov, there are three different types of distraction that can set up drivers for a crash:

- Visual — taking your eyes off the road
- Manual — taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive — taking your mind off what you're doing

Texting is perhaps the classic example of distracted driving. What makes it so dangerous is that it involves all three types of distraction. Distracted driving is not limited to texting or talking on a cellphone, though. Here are some other examples that fit the description:

- Eating and drinking
- Talking to passengers
- Grooming
- Reading, including maps
- Using a navigation system
- Watching a video
- Fiddling with the radio



To combat the distracted driving problem, the Department of Defense has banned drivers from using handheld cellphones on military installations. Also, most states and many municipalities have joined the campaign to eliminate distracted driving by imposing their own restrictions.

I realized I put myself in a distracted driving environment every time I enter the post. The simple act of placing my CAC back into its slotted carrying case was the problem. As I fumbled with my card, I did the three things you are not supposed to do: I took my eyes off the road, my hands off the wheel and my

“What about you? Have you ever done anything while behind the wheel that would be considered distracted driving?”

What about you? Have you ever done anything while behind the wheel that would be considered distracted driving? Be honest. If you travel onto a military installation every morning like I do, chance are you have driven distracted.

One morning, after showing the guard my common access card and passing through the gate, I

mind off what I was doing.

My solution to this “CAC distract” was to either put it in my shirt pocket, toss it onto the empty passenger seat or put it into the cup holder in the console. Whatever you choose, it's a lot safer to put it back in the card holder after arriving at work and shutting down your vehicle.



“The University of Utah found drivers using cellphones, including hands-free models, had similar reaction times to motorists with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 percent.”

A closer look at 2013 data from distraction.gov reveals some surprising facts from agencies such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

- 10 percent of fatal crashes, 18 percent of injury crashes and 16 percent of all police-reported motor vehicle traffic crashes were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- There were 3,154 people killed and an estimated additional 424,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.
- 10 percent of all drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the crashes.
- There were 480 non-occupants killed in distraction-affected crashes. It is unknown how many of these non-occupants were potentially distracted as well.

So how badly does distracted driving impair a driver's skills? The University of Utah found drivers using cellphones, including hands-free models, had similar reaction times to motorists with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 percent.

The statistics prove that distracted driving is dangerous. But the real question is the one you'll have to ask yourself: “What am I doing behind the wheel that I treat as more important than driving?” And then ask yourself, “Is it more important than living?” ■

Family strong!

Family engagement kit

<https://safety.army.mil>

Army Safe is Army Strong and that starts with a Soldier's Family. Have the information to help you and your Family stay SAFE.



I Should Have Double-Checked

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 EDWARD SMITH
C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 6th Cavalry
Regiment (Heavy Cav)
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Army aviation — a world of checklists, acronyms, crew coordination and more checklists. We have multiple documents that instruct us step by step how to start an engine. We also have regulations that tell us we have to follow them. It is so ingrained in aviators that following proper checklist procedures is important that we often find ourselves double- and triple-checking steps that have already been completed and verified by both crewmembers. Still, the checklist can't cover everything. There are some tasks we must accomplish that tend to fall more on common sense. Sadly, many times these are the tasks that result in Class A, B and C accidents. In April 2014, I found myself making the statement, "I wish I would have double-checked that."

Our flight was a standard two-ship, deep-attack training mission. We launched from Camp Humphreys, South Korea, and conducted a deep attack just to the north of Camp Carroll. Aside from an intermittent issue with my gunner's helmet avionics harness, the mission went as planned and we proceeded to Camp Walker to refuel.

We arrived about 20 minutes later than originally planned. The operations officer informed me after we landed that we wouldn't



have a lot of time on the ground. A flight of four other AH-64Ds was en route and needed the parking area. Camp Walker allows for cold refueling only, so the aircraft needed to be completely restarted before we could depart.

Now the stage was set. We were already running short on time, and, as we were expediting our

and an armament technician from one of our sister companies sitting right next to flight operations. They immediately came over and began assisting with the troubleshooting. After only 10 minutes, they had it figured out and we were set to crank.

Up to this point, we had followed every step in the checklist and

"We were already running short on time, and, as we were expediting our through-flight, we discovered my gunner was unable to boresight his helmet and his symbology was going in and out."

through-flight, we discovered my gunner was unable to boresight his helmet and his symbology was going in and out. Fortunately for us, there were four crew chiefs

every standard in our safety SOP. The crew chief verified with me that we were ready for engine start and then announced he was going to close my canopy. I was



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moving pretty quickly through the checklist so I could get the engines cranked and get off the ground. I watched him close the canopy and rotate the handle. I reached down and touched the handle and it felt secure; thus, I completed that step in the checklist. Within five minutes we had the engines up and ready for flight and I informed my wingman we were on the go.

Soon after departure from Camp Walker, my wingman called and pointed out the flight of four AH-64s to our front. I contacted their flight on the radio and informed them we would climb to 2,000 feet above ground level (1,000 feet above the prescribed departure altitude) and allow them to enter the pattern. After safely passing them, I called air traffic control and began my decent back down to VFR altitude.

No more than 10 seconds after beginning my descent, I saw (in my peripheral vision) my canopy door start to move outward. By the time I recognized what was happening, it was already too late. My canopy abruptly slammed into the full open position. Miraculously, the flimsy shock managed to hold the door to the aircraft rather than allowing it to enter the rotor system. I screamed for my gunner to take the controls and rapidly decelerate the aircraft. Altogether, the entire mishap lasted no more than a minute from the time the canopy ripped open to the time I secured it.

After landing, shutting down and inspecting the door hinges, I determined I would be able to return to Camp Humphreys. The entire way back I remember sitting there in disbelief thinking about what had just happened. Of all steps in the checklist, how did I manage to not verify the canopy was secure? We were traveling at 120 KTAS and descending at 600-700 feet per minute when the canopy opened. It probably goes without saying that I now triple-check the canopy handle before takeoff. ■

ARE YOU READY?

ARAP

ARMY READINESS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

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.

Sign up for your assessment today!

<https://safety.army.mil>

HERE IT COMES

Are you ready to crank?



READY ... OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their “readiness” for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we’re not. Navigating life’s challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



<https://safety.army.mil>



Why Do We Continue to Fall?

JASON WALSH

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Japan District

Falls are some of the most common and easily avoidable causes of injury in the workplace. So why do they continue to happen? The safety community is constantly trying to answer that question.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration statistics indicate that incorrect use of fall-protection equipment, a lack of training and failure to respect heights all play a role in the number of fall-related incidents. For whatever reason, many workers have some misconceptions and prejudices about using fall protection. I'm sure you have heard someone say that wearing a harness and lanyard will only slow them down, get in the way or reduce productivity. In some cases, that may be true — but workers must consider what could happen if they actually did fall.

Fall hazards are everywhere in the workplace, and thousands of workers are seriously injured or killed in fall accidents every year. We're all responsible to ensure our workplace is safe and free from hazards. We must take a proactive approach in eradicating these hazards and protect ourselves from the ones that can't be eliminated.

So what can you do to prevent yourself or one of your co-workers from getting hurt? Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do we have fall hazards at our workplace?
- Do we have a fall protection program at work?
- Do we use a fall protection system (harness, lanyard, etc.)?



- Do we know when we are required to use fall protection?
- Do we need fall protection training?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you need to ensure you have a fall protection plan that is site-specific to your workplace. There are many ways employers can protect workers from falls, including, but not limited to, safety nets,

harness, lanyard and anchor point.

Make sure you inspect your equipment before each use for any signs of damage. Knowing when to replace equipment is extremely important. If any of the three PFAS elements mentioned above are neglected, you might be looking for trouble! It's a good idea to inspect equipment regularly, keeping in mind the old safety slogan, "If in doubt, throw

“Fall hazards are everywhere in the workplace, and thousands of workers are seriously injured or killed in fall accidents every year.”

horizontal lifelines, guardrails and personal fall arrest systems, or PFAS, which may consist of a fall arrest system, positioning system and travel restraint systems. PFASs are made up of three main elements — a safety

it out.” Also, equipment should be stored in a cool, dry and safe area. Correct storage is a necessity.

OSHA has joined with the American Society of Safety Engineers and National Institute of



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Occupational Safety and Health to support a fall protection campaign that focuses on injuries and fatalities in the construction industry. The campaign aims to put a stop to falls in the construction industry and provides some great prevention information and training material on different types of falls. It can be found at <http://stopconstructionfalls.com>.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is also raising awareness by providing all of its districts a fall protection

program guide with up-to-date regulations and standards. The USACE understands and recognizes the importance of having a current, site-specific fall protection program and ensuring all employees are aware and trained when it comes to fall protection. For more information, visit the USACE website at <http://www.usace.army.mil/>. Remember, the most important part of your job is that you do it safely and go home to your family at the end of your shift. ■

Did You Know?

Even if your job doesn't require you to work from heights, you can help yourself and your co-workers by following and sharing some of these simple and well-known safety tips:

General workplace safety

- Look out for fall hazards such as loose tile or carpets, broken railings and stair risers. If you see something, report it so it can be repaired.
- Make certain adequate lighting is provided.
- Keep workstations, passageways, exit routes and stairways free of clutter.
- If you spill something (water, oil, grease, etc.), clean it up or cordon off the area immediately and report it.
- Always use handrails when walking up or down stairs.
- Do not overload yourself with boxes, tools, etc. Make sure you can see over or around your load.

Ladder safety

- Use the right ladder for the job.
- When you use an A-frame stepladder, ensure the brace is locked in place.
- Inspect the ladder for damage and hazards such as splinters and cracks.
- Never stand on the top step of a ladder.
- Always maintain three points of contact.
- Do not lean out from a ladder; keep your belt buckle between the ladder side rails.



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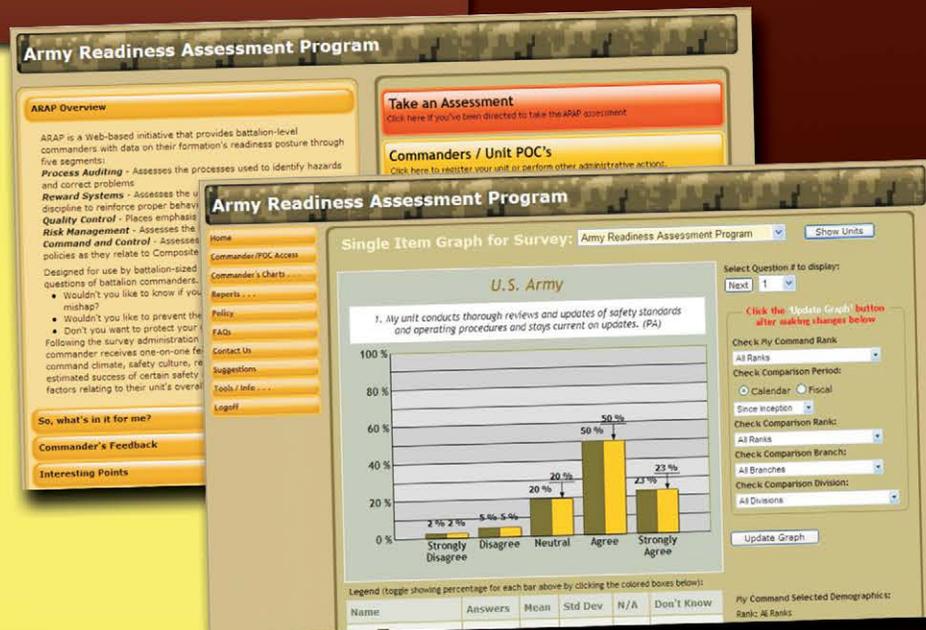
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The Scenic Route MIKE MILLER



The day began as a perfect, cool, sunny Sunday morning. I was driving along the Missouri-Arkansas state line from my home in Overland Park, Kansas, to visit relatives in Pea Ridge, Arkansas. This easy, 225-mile drive should have taken me about four hours. Instead, I arrived 24 hours late and \$1,500 lighter in the wallet.

I started my journey at 6 a.m. after a good night's sleep. My trusty Dodge Dakota pickup was in excellent condition with four new tires providing a firm grip on the asphalt. I was eagerly looking forward to the drive on U.S. Highway 71, a direct route south from metro Kansas City to northwest Arkansas and the shortest route to my Uncle Norman's Quail Ridge farm. "Seventy-one highway," — as the locals call it — is a modern, limited-access, four-lane road resembling an interstate highway

in every regard. I had thoroughly planned the trip, applying the tenets of risk management.

Just a few miles north of the Arkansas state line, I elected to take a more scenic route. I turned onto Missouri State Highway 90, a two-lane blacktop road that passed through the "bourgeoning"

"Just before the impact, he looked at me, realizing he had driven into my lane and a collision was imminent."

metropolis of Jane, Missouri. This proved to be a highly significant and costly tactical error.

Cruising along at 45 mph, I noticed a dense line of trees growing along the right side of the road. These trees effectively obscured a couple of mobile

homes located on a gravel road intersecting my road from the right. Through my peripheral vision, I detected movement behind the trees. What I thought was a lone running black dog, turned out to be a dog chasing a 1969 Chevrolet step-side pickup.

The driver of the ancient Chevy never paused at the intersection and pulled right in front of me. Those trees had probably screened his vision just as they had mine. The look on his face was one of horror. Just before the impact, he looked at me, realizing he had driven into my lane and a collision was imminent. Shouting a colorful expletive, I stood on my antilock brakes, but there was nowhere to go. I braced for impact.

I remember hearing a loud bang and then my truck's cab filled with smoke from the airbag. Snug in my seat belt, I don't recall

my face bouncing off the bag; but later I had to wash off the white powder. I had been careful to keep my hands on the steering wheel's 9 and 3 o'clock positions. That's important because following the conventional wisdom of placing your hands at the 10 and 2 o'clock positions can



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lead to serious injuries when the airbag deploys. Suffering only minor burns to both thumbs, I was extremely lucky to be uninjured. My truck didn't fare so well. It was crunched beyond repair.

I consider myself fortunate to be alive. Research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reveals that more than 70 percent of all fatal accidents happen on rural roads with speed limits of 55 mph or higher. These higher speeds, coupled with sometimes poorly engineered roads and slower emergency response times, all combine to make rural driving more hazardous.

“ I attribute that to the fact I consistently wear my seat belt, drive within the posted speed limit and have antilock brakes. ”

The state trooper responding to my accident was amazed (based upon my crumpled truck) that I was not seriously injured. I attribute that to the fact I consistently wear my seat belt, drive within the posted speed limit and have antilock brakes. If only the other driver had insurance, this mishap would have only cost me time and inconvenience — not cash!

We can all learn from others. Motor vehicle collisions will happen even when you're doing everything right. Also, don't assume high-speed interstates are the most dangerous places you can drive. Sometimes it's while you're enjoying a more relaxed scenic route that the unexpected happens. Don't presume you are safe just because you're in an idyllic setting. Always watch out for the other guy. He might just make you a victim of his bad decisions. ■

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A Mountainous Mistake

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 KEVIN HARMS
1-1 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion
Fort Riley, Kansas



While assigned to a 12-hour quick-reaction force shift in RC-South, Afghanistan, my team prepped their assigned AH-64D as part of the attack weapons team. I was assigned run-up duty for the backup aircraft, which included preflight, run-up, communications and mission equipment checks to ensure they were fully mission capable.

Run-up went as usual; all of the aircraft were FMC and ready for the day. During the team brief, the crews went over a training mission that was to be conducted with a ground force commander to practice joint tactical controller techniques. It was a senior crew mix for the day. Lead would have a senior field grade and CW3 AMSO, while trail would have a CW2 instructor pilot and a CW2 who was a pilot in command candidate. Each pilot had a minimum of 700 hours, as well as gunnery and previous live engagements

during the deployment.

Our battalion assigned the company the task of completing aerial gunnery during the deployment to alleviate the requirement of having to complete aerial gunnery qualifications within six months of returning to home station. The task force was more than five months into a nine-month rotation. The lead aircraft was not

“Apparently, they had accidentally fired a missile during their simulated remote Hellfire engagement.”

combat crewed for gunnery and was not participating in a graded capacity. The trail aircraft was combat crewed, so it was decided that they would complete some day engagements during the training event. The AWT launched as normal

and set off on their training mission.

Upon return from their mission, the company commander and I were watching the AWT roll back into the parking area. We noticed the trail aircraft was missing a missile from the standard two-missile configuration. My commander was curious and went straight to the trail aircraft after shutdown. Apparently, they had accidentally fired a missile during their simulated remote Hellfire engagement.

Trail had the IP flying from the co-pilot-gunner station while the junior CW2 PC candidate was flying from the pilot station. Everything was going as usual, practicing good techniques and placing effective rounds on target. Then came time for the simulated remote Hellfire engagement.

As any Apache pilot knows, remote Hellfire engagements involve a long and cumbersome script. Lead had the script for

the engagement on board and was responsible for acting as the ground force commander for this particular engagement. Lead was reading it slower than anticipated, which caused the trail CPG, who was also the PC, to become



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more focused on ensuring the aircraft was in a good position. Overloaded when it came time to simulate firing the missile, natural instinct took over and his left hand went directly for the trigger. The missile left the rail and headed straight for the mountain ahead.

Luckily, they had a few things going for them that day. Their preplanned training area had been chosen on the side of an unpopulated mountain

within 10 miles of the forward operations base. The ground force would be located about 2-3 miles to the south of the impact area. Also, the mountain that was planned as a back stop for all fires worked perfectly in catching the errant missile.

The IP was grounded until completion of the investigation. He was back up about a month later. He has shared his lessons learned with the fellow pilots in

our battalion and served as an example that even an experienced instructor can make mistakes. As an old instructor once told me, "We are in a mistake-making business," which still rings in my heart today. We must remember that people before us made mistakes to help us be the aviators we are today. That mountain I may never see again will always be a lesson for me and all members of my unit. ■

RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

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

MMP
MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the U.S Army Combat Readiness Center MMP website for some examples of active mentoring programs.

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

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Are you ready
to hit the
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- Have your vehicle serviced
- Plan your route
- Pack an emergency road kit
- Check the weather forecast
- Get plenty of rest
- Complete a TRIPS assessment

READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their "readiness" for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



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Never Trust a Turtle

JAYSON ALLAN
Regional Health Command – Atlantic (Provisional)
Fort Meade, Maryland

So there I was, enjoying a hike through the woods in the Appalachian Mountains on a hot summer day. I'd been searching for hours for exotic and non-native species of plants with two co-workers when I stumbled over what appeared to be at first glance a large, round rock. Upon further investigation, I realized the rock was actually a rather large box turtle. I was excited about the impromptu photo opportunity with the little guy, but he was less than receptive. I tried every trick in the book to lure him out of his shell to no avail. He was not budging, and my gleeful intrigue quickly turned to frustration. That's when I let my emotions get the better of me!

Dejected that the reptile didn't want to cooperate, I swung my steel-toed boot into the side of a nearby downed tree. A large thud echoed through the forest and suddenly I realized the error of my ways. The first thing I felt was a sting on the back of my neck, followed by another on my ear. I spun around, wondering what on earth was going on, and then I heard them. Hundreds of angry bees, perturbed because I had unknowingly kicked a hole in the side of their home, were after me.

I attempted to swat away the bees, but a few precise stings to the back of my neck brought me to my knees. I rolled on the ground like my clothes were on fire but this didn't do anything but make



them angrier. I quickly decided my only option was to get as far away from the scene as I could. I began running through the trees, but I just couldn't get any separation from them. They were all over my shirt, jeans and hat.

"I finally reached the edge of the creek, careful to not break my neck on any of the large rocks, and jumped in, bee-covered clothes and all."

I remembered a creek we had passed a few hundred yards back and decided it was my only hope. I continued running as fast as my legs would allow. I finally reached the edge of the creek, careful to not break my neck on any of the large rocks, and jumped in, bee-covered clothes and all. I rolled around under the

cold water, hoping it would deter the angry bees from any last-ditch stinging attempts. When I emerged from the water, I was tired, sore and, thankfully, alone.

When it was all said and done, I'd received 35 stings on various

parts on my body — the worst being my left ear, which received eight stings alone. I was cold and wet, and my pride was badly bruised. Once my adrenaline had dissipated, I began to feel the effects of the large volume of bee venom now streaming through my body. Fortunately, our emergency kit, which was located



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in the truck, had a bottle of Benadryl in it. After a few sips, the antihistamine kicked in and I started feeling better.

I let my emotions get the best of me that day. Add to that my unfamiliarity with the environment and it led to very dangerous event. If I had just remained calm and surveyed the situation, I would have noticed the gigantic bee hive, or at least seen the flying bees just a few feet in front of me.

I learned a few things from this experience. First, it doesn't matter how comfortable you are in the great outdoors. One lapse in judgment can turn a seemingly serene situation into a disaster. I was lucky I wasn't allergic to bees, although I didn't even know it before that day. Second, I learned to never trust a turtle. To this day I'm convinced he set me up and was working as an accomplice to the dastardly bees. (OK, so maybe that one is a stretch.) Finally, I'm grateful for the first aid kit and Benadryl we kept in the truck. Both were quite helpful. With no hospital or EpiPen in sight, the sheer volume of bee stings could have turned a nice, relaxing walk through the woods into a tragic event. ■

FYI

According to Backpacker magazine, there are many pre-packaged first aid kits on the market. Here are some items kits should contain for most types of hikes:

- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Antibiotic ointment
- Antiseptic towelettes
- Wound closure strips
- Moleskin or duct tape for blisters
- Band-Aids
- ACE bandage
- Bandana (for splints)
- Ibuprofen
- Antihistamine
- Gatorade powder drink mix (for emergency electrolytes and energy)

Also, for a survival/first aid kit:

- Signal device (whistle or mirror)
- Safety matches/fire starter
- Mylar blanket

WATCH THIS!

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What Will You Do?

CAPT. SHELTON D. JOHNSON
177th Armored Brigade Safety Officer
Camp Shelby, Mississippi

Editor's note: The names of the individuals mentioned in this story have been changed to protect their privacy.

1st Lt. Brock McDowell was preparing for one of the greatest challenges of his life as a Soldier — a deployment to Iraq — and decided to take some time off. Even though he loved being with his Soldiers at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, he wanted to take a four-day pass to travel to North Carolina to see his wife, who was expecting a baby girl any day.

McDowell, a platoon leader, mentored his Soldiers and they respected him for being a good leader. Several weeks earlier, he and some of the other Soldiers bought motorcycles with the extra funds they had received now that they had been mobilized. They all attended Motorcycle Safety Foundation training — a requirement for all Soldiers who ride — and were counseled by leadership on motorcycle safety.

McDowell planned to take Friday through Monday for his four-day pass. As he got off duty at 4:30 Thursday afternoon, 1st Lt. Gerald Knowles reminded McDowell of a get-together to watch a game that night. Since he wasn't leaving until the following day, McDowell decided to attend the party and rode his bike. When the game ended, he called his wife to tell her he was headed back to his apartment. As he was leaving, Knowles shook McDowell's hand and told him to be safe.

Heading home on U.S. Highway 49, McDowell gunned it on a



straight stretch of road and bent the speedometer needle past 100 mph. He'd reached 110 mph when a driver failed to see him approaching, pulled into the road and blindsided him. The impact threw McDowell more than 50 feet through the air before he landed on the road, where he died on impact.

I wondered who took that picture because they could have helped save McDowell's life. Instead of encouraging him to risk his life for a cool photo, they could have warned him to consider the possible consequences. Yet, time and again, Soldiers egg each other on to take needless, even

“What will you do when you see a buddy taking needless risks?”

Tragically, McDowell never took that four-day pass. He'd never see his wife again or meet their baby girl.

McDowell's unit investigated his death. Some of the answers the investigating officer got during his interviews led him to check out McDowell's Facebook page. When he opened it, he saw pictures of McDowell performing dangerous stunts on his motorcycle. Most surprising — almost prophetic — were those photos showing McDowell speeding on U.S. 49. A person riding in a car alongside him took a photo titled, “This is me at 110 mph.”

deadly, risks just to prove they can do it. Sure, McDowell was responsible for his decision to ride recklessly, but he didn't make that decision in a vacuum — others encouraged him.

So, what about you? What will you do when you see a buddy taking needless risks? Will you warn them of the dangers or egg them on to see what happens? Will you mentor them or set them up to be a fallen comrade? The moment you know a buddy is at risk, you've stopped being an innocent bystander. You are responsible. You have a choice. What will you do? ■

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Stay With Your Standards

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 WILLIAM R. REGERT
A Company, 15th Military Intelligence
Battalion (Aerial Exploitation)
Fort Hood, Texas

Serving as unit safety officer in a Hunter MQ-5(B) company has been a new and exciting challenge. It was, as duty often requires, somewhat of a task to return from a capabilities-based rotation in Operation Enduring Freedom and bring my garrison program back to standard. I anticipated hurdles bringing the continuity and safety procedures back to standard because there was no backfill for my position in garrison. The battalion safety officer was covering down and was, sadly, overworked and underappreciated.

Working diligently for two weeks and returning much of the needed administrative tasks and other necessary housekeeping for our unit's safety program back to respectability was starting to take shape. In addition, there were only a few UAS flights scheduled, just launch and recovery missions; basically, just a couple of pop and stops. This allowed me to focus on the neglected paperwork. The last thing I considered was any type of incident involving our unmanned fleet with these limited training flights, so I focused my efforts toward getting on target with my safety program and the neglected admin areas.

Hunter UAS operations required our aircraft to be moved from our hangar to our launch and recovery site, which is about two-thirds of a mile directly down Taxiway Alpha, with one of the unit's



Gators. Per our unit maintenance SOP, these operations require a driver and troop commander with appropriate personal protective equipment (helmet and eye-pro) at no faster than 5 mph. These procedures are required to and from the launch and recovery site.

He saw his mistake and desperately tried to get his attention. It was too late and the wing impacted the Tri-Max. The only saving grace was the fact that the Gator operator was able to apply his brakes to minimize the wing damage to a minor dent in the leading edge

“The battalion safety officer was covering down and was, sadly, overworked and underappreciated.”

Upon return from the morning's flight operations, three Gators were returning, with two of them towing aircraft from the unit launch recovery site. The last Gator of the three was towing an aircraft without a TC, and the driver turned off of the taxiway and was not paying attention. As a result, the driver struck one of the Tri-Max fire extinguishers placed parallel to the taxiway with one of the aircraft's wings. As the driver was turning, another service member

noticed

about the size of a silver dollar. As required, the mission coordinator promptly contacted me (the safety officer) and the emergency accident plan was initiated. I promptly left a meeting to determine what had occurred outside our hangar. The chain of command was notified, pictures were taken of the accident scene and statements were taken by all the pertinent personnel. While reading statements and speaking to all of



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the players to determine what had occurred, it was obvious negligence had been a factor. Yet, when digging into the entire situation, this incident was more than just one Soldier not paying attention.

The unit as a whole had completely gotten away from the standards written in our maintenance SOP. Although the driver involved in the incident was moving at the correct speed and wearing the prescribed PPE, none of the Gators driving to and from the launch and recovery site had a TC with them. Complacency as a unit had been the cause. A contributing factor was a lack of leader supervision to ensure the measures we had worked so hard to establish were being introduced to our new Soldiers. They were not being enforced.

After I completed the AGAR, I discussed with my company commander a recommended course of action to prevent this type of incident from happening again. It was agreed that the entire unit would review the maintenance SOP as a company. This would be followed by a UAS towing procedure class taught by the maintenance officer and platoon sergeant. Prior to this training, the findings were briefed to the entire company so as to not point blame, but to get all personnel to understand why our SOPs and procedures are so valuable to mission

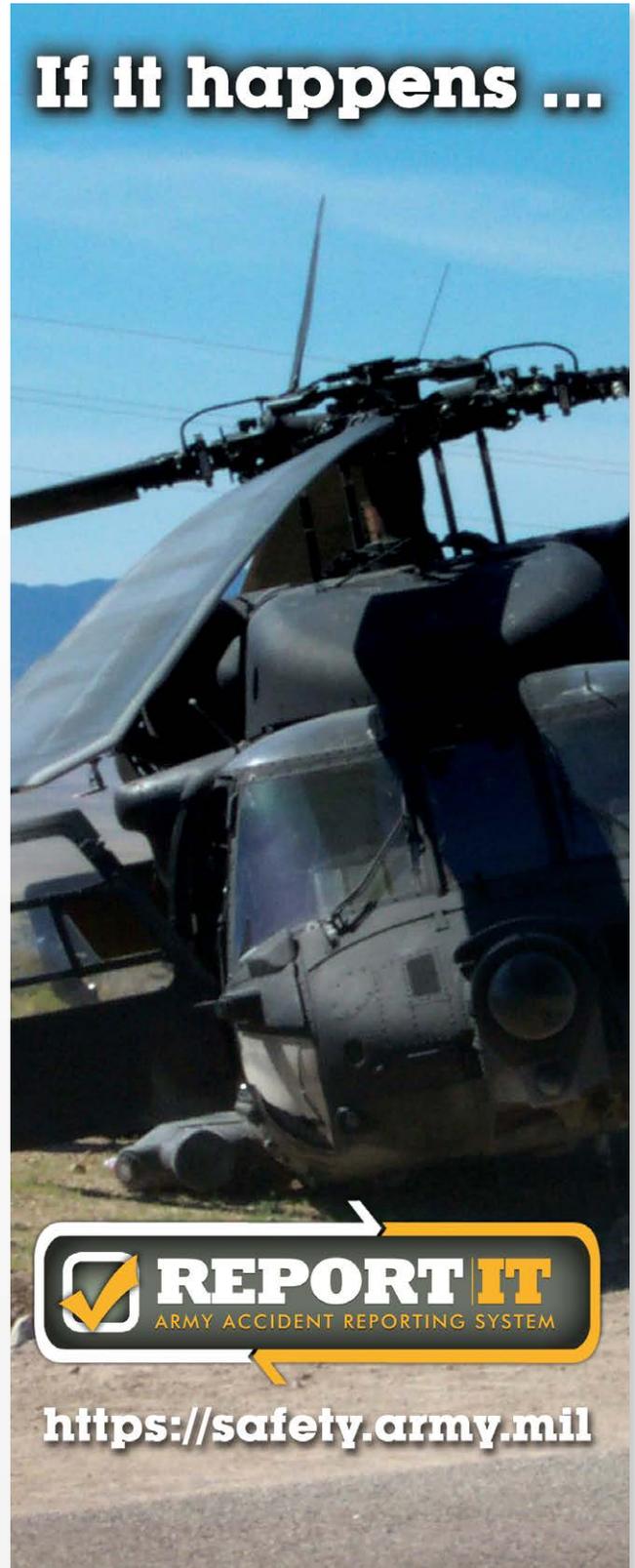
success and overall safety.

This incident was labeled as only a ground mishap with a total cost of \$483.10. In retrospect, it had the potential to be much worse. The entire aircraft could have been a loss considering the body of the AV is made of carbon fiber that is quite susceptible to damage to impact, like a Tri-Max fire extinguisher. Considering the positives of how this entire situation unfolded, the incident had validated our emergency action plan as effective and all of the personnel reacted appropriately.

We always expect Soldiers to do the right thing and execute accordingly in the absence of orders. The Soldiers, not the officers, are the driving force behind unmanned flight operations in today's Army. If it is expected that an unmanned unit maintain the high standards we hold in any other aviation formation, we as leaders have an obligation to establish, educate and enforce standards so all Soldiers can know them and understand how to be safe and successful.

Incidents such as this one are never welcome. Nevertheless, as a result of this incident, I believe the unit as a whole is better for it and will be more cognizant of potential hazards during all facets of flight operations in the future. ■

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