



THIS MONTH JUNE 2016



Time Well Spent CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 ERIC B. BARNETT

Prior to deployment, our unit practiced the power management issues we expected to encounter in Afghanistan. It paid off.

The mission started on a good day for flying: clear skies, plenty of visibility and a high in the 90s. Transporting a general officer to meetings throughout RC-East was the order of the day, but then things changed. Early in the mission, the general started monitoring a joint operation that was in contact

with very unfriendly people. Apparently this was expected, so we continued with our mission.

During the general's planned meeting, our flight of two UH-60 Black Hawks were fully refueled in anticipation of the long return trip to Bagram with minimal passengers on board. Our quick lunch break was interrupted by a call from the general's staff. The unit in contact was in immediate need of ammunition and water. Our mission now was to transport "speedballs" (body

bags full of supplies such as ammunition and water) to the troops in contact. The speedballs were being loaded as we took the power control levers to fly.

The speedballs looked very heavy, so we asked for an estimate of the weight from the crew loading them. They estimated the speedballs weighed 2,000 pounds total. That number was going to work out fine, even with the full tanks on a hot day with the landing zone's estimated altitude being 7,000 feet. But

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we discovered a problem when our hover power check and tabular data said our internal load was just over 3,000 pounds. Doing the math, we projected we would burn off enough fuel and get the weight down to a safe number to land on the LZ at 7,000 feet.

During our 15-minute flight to the LZ, we made radio contact with a pair of Apaches that were providing close air support to the troops in contact.

“The training we had invested prior to deployment for the power management issues we expected to encounter in Afghanistan was time well spent.”

The Apaches informed us to slow our approach because the LZ was still cherry (hot, under fire). “No problem,” we thought, as we needed the time to burn off more fuel. However, another problem made itself known.

The Apaches stated the altitude of the LZ was actually 8,500 feet. This made our power margin next to nothing. We needed to lose weight if we were going to

land safely. We activated the engine anti-ice and started the auxiliary power unit in an attempt to burn more fuel. The crew also discussed the possibility of throwing out one of the speedballs to lighten the aircraft.

While we maintained an orbit waiting for the ice (safe to land) call, we had the opportunity to note the wind direction in regard to the landing axis at the LZ. Good news — it appeared our approach direction would

be into the wind. The LZ had a slight nose and right wheel upslope, which did not seem to present any further issue to overcome. Another computation with tabular data showed we should have just enough power to safely land the Black Hawk.

We got the ice call and it was time to resupply the troops. The pilot in command had the controls. I split my attention between scanning

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The Army Safety Team provides the Army with safety and risk management expertise to preserve readiness through the prevention of accidental loss of our Soldiers, Civilians, Families and vital resources.



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the instruments and a continuous scan of the hasty LZ. We entered our approach at a reasonable airspeed and altitude. As the PC started to slow our rate of closure, I noted our rotor RPM started to decrease. With every percent loss I would make a quick glance outside as I made my callout. My concern increased as the rotor RPM decreased. The ground was getting very close, very fast.

The low-rotor audio sounded at about 100 feet above ground level and we were still coming in hot. I braced for what I thought

would be a very hard landing. As the PC reduced collective to get back the rotor, the aircraft entered IGE (in ground effect). The last-second cushion made for one of the best landings I have ever experienced in a Black Hawk. The slight slope of the terrain and our landing profile merged for a perfect simultaneous three-wheeled landing. We were down and safe. We waved over the troops to unload the speedballs. Fortunately, our takeoff was far less eventful since we were now 3,000 pounds lighter.

The training we had invested prior to deployment for the power management issues we expected to encounter in Afghanistan was time well spent. We practiced how to calculate zero-fuel weight and use tabular data on every training mission. Being proficient in recognizing the limitations to performance at high altitudes and high temperatures was and is the difference between a good landing or a bad day. ■

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A Shortcut to Failure

COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF

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

It was a typical multiple-unit training assembly five-drill weekend. The unit had planned a battalion field training exercise at an area a little over an hour away. Like most drill weekends, everyone seemed to have too much to do and not enough time to get it all done. At least the weather was clear, even though it was cold. The training schedule called for the unit to get all the vehicles dispatched, loaded and marshaled on Friday evening. The first serial of the ground convoy was due to depart early the next morning.

The Class III/V (fuel and ammunition) platoon sergeant wasn't looking forward to this FTX. His platoon leader was new and providing more distractions than leadership. He thought about the lack of qualified personnel in his platoon, especially in the ammunition section. He had more vehicles than any platoon in the company, but he wasn't sure if there were enough drivers to get them all to the field site. He also was concerned about his new ammunition squad leader, Sgt. Lammon. Lammon wasn't a bad NCO. He was



just inexperienced and had a tendency to procrastinate. "Well," the platoon sergeant thought, "I'll just have to light a fire under him this weekend."

The platoon sergeant met with his squad leaders and briefed them on the tasks they had to accomplish that night. He then went over the timeline for the rest of the weekend, stressing the commander's emphasis on making the convoy start time.

The motor pool and armory were beehives of activity that evening. The fulltime staff had dispatched many of the vehicles already, but some were left for Saturday's departure. There also was a great deal of equipment to load. Serial commanders received their convoy briefs and prepared themselves to brief their own serial the next morning.

In an area outside the motor pool, Spc. Downey was conducting maintenance checks on the 11-ton ammunition trailer

he'd be pulling with his HEMMTT. Downey loved driving the big truck. The feeling of power he got from sitting high above the traffic with the roar of the giant diesel behind him was one of the reasons he stayed in the Guard. He was a good driver, and he was proud of his skill in maneuvering the eight-wheeled truck with its long trailer.

Downey carefully went around the trailer and checked the tires. The left-rear tire looked a little low. He thought about the amount of time it would take to get an air compressor. The motor pool was a madhouse with the whole battalion running around. He decided the tire was low because of the cold weather. His car tires sometimes looked low on cold mornings and they were always fine. "It'll be OK," Downey thought as he finished the checks.

After formation the next morning, Lammon briefed his squad on the updated



timeline he'd just received. The ammunition section would be departing in about two hours, so he told everyone to recheck their vehicles and pick up their MREs for the day. Lammon wanted to be sure his squad left on time. The platoon sergeant had made it clear that being late was a bad thing.

Downey went to his truck and did a quick walk-around to ensure all the air hoses were installed correctly. As he walked around the trailer, he noticed the left-rear tire was completely flat. He silently hoped the motor pool still had the air compressor out where he could use it. As Downey looked closely, however, he saw something he'd missed the night before — a bolt head sticking out of the tire.

Downey was in trouble now. There wasn't much time and he was going to have to mount the spare. Sgt. Lammon was going to be upset. Downey looked around and saw Pfc. Reames driving the platoon's 4K rough-terrain forklift, carrying a pallet of fuel hoses to a 5-ton truck. "That's it," Downey thought. "I'll get Reames to lift the corner of the trailer with the forklift while I change the tire." Using the forklift would allow him to change it quickly and without having to use the cumbersome jack.

Downey called Reames over, and they soon had the forklift positioned. Lammon walked over and asked what they were doing. He was livid Downey had not dealt with the problem tire the night before, but he knew they were running out of time. When Downey explained how he could change the tire using the forklift, Lammon knew it wasn't the right way to do it. But

"If you are a leader, demand your subordinates follow and learn the proper procedures for their jobs."

what could it hurt? The forklift easily could lift the weight. Lammon told them to get the tire changed, but to be safe doing it. He then walked away to look over the rest of the squad.

Downey ground guided Reames so he'd place the forks under the trailer evenly. The forks kept hanging on something under the trailer, so Downey yelled for Reames to stop. Downey climbed between the forklift and the trailer to see what was catching the forks. As Downey stood between the forks, Reames' foot slipped off the clutch, killing the engine as the machine lurched forward.

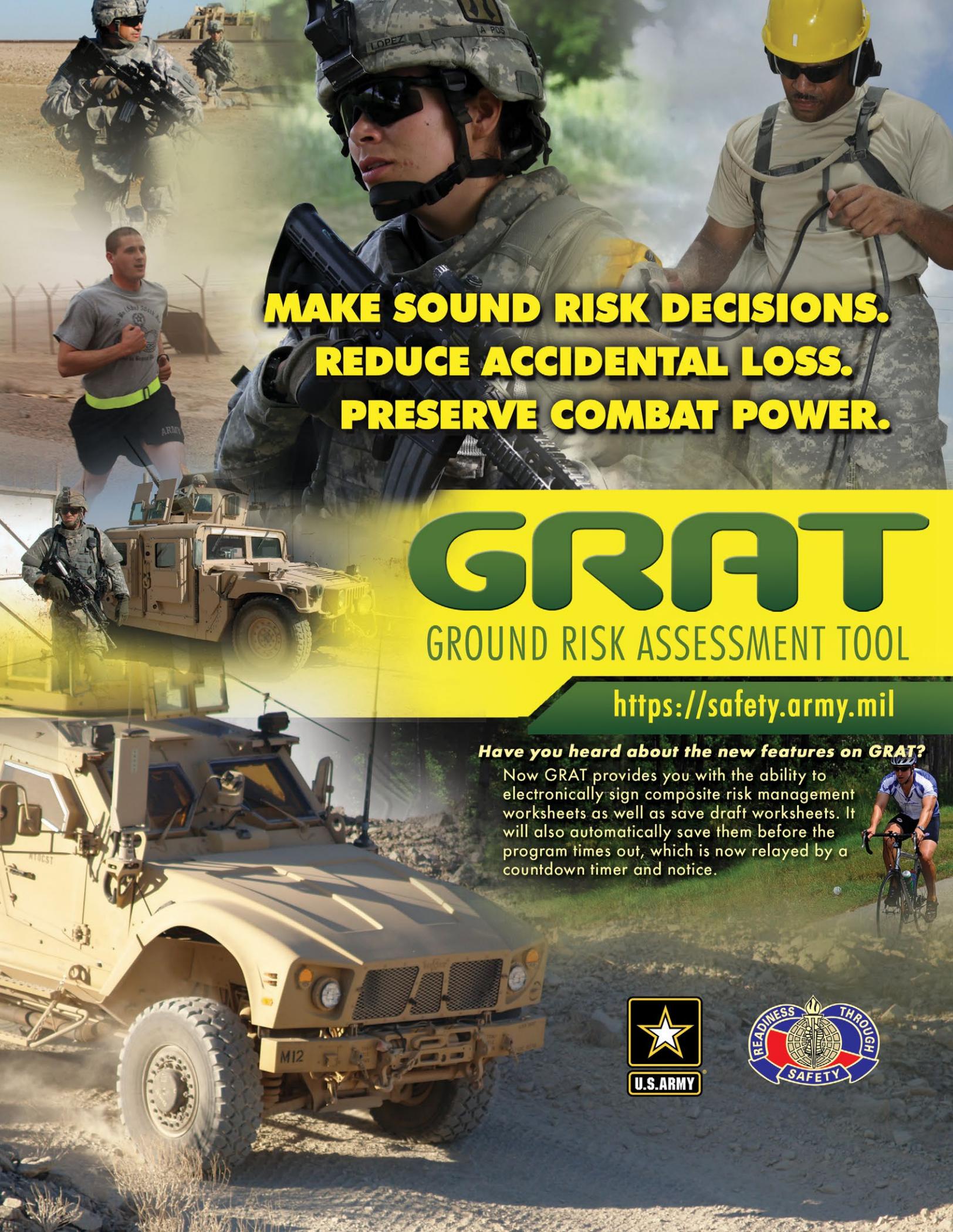
Downey screamed as the forklift pinned him between the trailer and the forks at hip

level. As Reames restarted the engine and backed away, Downey passed out and fell to the ground. The local fire and rescue unit carried Downey to the emergency room. He was lucky. The impact only chipped a small piece of bone from his hip. Other than some serious bruising, he had no other injuries.

The unit learned a lot from this incident. A good Soldier did something he knew wasn't right to get the job done quickly. His squad leader, who also knew the correct way to change the tire, condoned the shortcut to stay on the timeline.

Shortcuts provide positive reinforcement because people usually aren't hurt when they use them. How many times do you speed in traffic to save a little time? Do you have an accident every time you speed? No, and that makes you feel the shortcut is worth the risk. Not following proper procedures will not cause an accident every time, but are you willing to risk your Soldiers' lives to save a few minutes?

Soldiering is a dangerous profession; shortcuts and not following the standards make it even more so. If you are a leader, demand your subordinates follow and learn the proper procedures for their jobs. ■



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Oh, Deer LYNETTE STREITFIELD

It was still dark at 5:15 a.m. as I rode home from Arlington, Virginia, where I'd pulled my night-shift gig in the National Guard Bureau watch cell. I was wearing my battle dress uniform and Matterhorn boots along with an "armored" Tour Master cold-weather riding coat with reflective tabs on the sleeves. I was also wearing my full-face helmet. I had just scooted through the "mixing bowl" on I-95 South and knew there were a lot of big rigs behind me.

I was about 500 feet from the exit for Fort Belvoir, riding in the right lane on a poorly lit section of the road. I was just about home free when I suddenly saw a gray mass in front of me. Whatever it was, it didn't seem to know what it wanted to do. I had traffic in the lane next to me, so there was nowhere for me to go but straight. As I prepared for the impact, I thought, "Well, here goes!" The last thing I remember hearing was the sound of crunching plastic.

When I came to, I was lying on the highway, unable to move. I knew right away I'd fractured my left clavicle. Suddenly, two



people were lifting me out of the roadway. The pain of being lifted under my arms was so excruciating that I passed out again.

I woke up as someone was steadying my head while another person checked my lower extremities for injuries. Because my chin strap was choking me, we broke a cardinal rule regarding motorcycle accidents and removed my helmet.

As it turned out, one of the people who pulled me out of the highway was a Marine en route to Quantico. He'd seen the whole thing and told me I'd nearly been run over twice while lying in the

road. He'd crossed three lanes of some of the most dangerous traffic in America to get to me. Truckers speed through that area like they've got a hot date waiting at the weigh station in Dale City.

Looking back, I'm not sure any amount of training could have prepared me for this kind of event. While I'd figured I would see deer along the smaller side roads I took getting to work, I never expected to see one on the interstate. That just shows you'll never know when Bambi will get a death wish. The one thing I had going for me that morning was my personal protective equipment. My helmet bore the brunt of my hitting the road, and I received replacement cost (plus) to get a new one, which I did.

I came away from the accident with severe whiplash, a fractured left clavicle that required two surgeries, and a totaled motorcycle. I was also out of work

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.



almost five months. But at least I was alive.

After the accident, I ordered a new Yamaha FJR-1300 and had it delivered. As soon as I was healthy enough, I got back on the

road and started riding again. That's the beauty of wearing PPE. When the unexpected happens, you get a chance to survive, get back on a bike and ride again. That sure beats the alternative. ■

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. ■



Have fun while helping your battle buddy!

MMP

MOTORCYCLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Check out the USACR/Safety Center MMP website for some examples of active mentoring programs.
<https://safety.army.mil/mmp/>





Sharing the Skies

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 AARON MITCHELL
Third Army, U.S. Army Central
Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina

It was November 2004 in Tikrit, Iraq, and I was a newly designated AH-64A Apache pilot in command assigned to Charlie Company, 1-1 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion. Our unit was deployed to Forward Operating Base Speicher, which was a former Iraqi air force base prior to the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. We had deployed from our home station of Katterbach, Germany, in February and were now nine months into Operation Iraqi Freedom II, the second year of the operation. This particular morning, at about 10 a.m., I was in the lead aircraft of our team of two Apaches as we flew from FOB Speicher to FOB Warrior, another airport on the outskirts of the city of Kirkuk.

Like most of our missions that year, this day's mission was fairly routine: one hour of flight time over largely uninhabited desert terrain until we reached FOB Warrior, where we landed, shut down and tied down the aircraft. Here we would conduct a face-to-face linkup with the brigade operations officer to determine if there were any updates or changes to our task and purpose, conduct a final team brief that encapsulated the mission objectives, grab a quick lunch at the dining facility (time permitting, of course), and then make a timely departure for mission execution.



We were to provide a convoy escort for a logistics supply run to one of the outlying bases. It would be about a three-hour mission in which we would establish FM communications on a pre-determined frequency with the convoy commander to provide him with armed reconnaissance and overwatch while he perilously navigated through hostile Iraqi roads to get supplies to the warfighter. Truly the unsung heroes of the operation were these logistics professionals that hung it all on the line almost daily to ensure our troops got the necessities they required. Fortunately, this mission ended like most others: the convoy arrived safely at its destination, and our team refueled one last time at Kirkuk before departing for FOB Speicher.

By today's technological standards, our antiquated AH-64As were dinosaurs — mostly analog switches, steam gauges and paper

maps, baby! The glass cockpit concept (computerized displays with multifunctional screens and buttons) sounded like something from the future to us, but we considered flying these aircraft as a bit of a badge of honor.

Our aircraft were the oldest A-models remaining in the Apache fleet. They had actually seen action in Operation Desert Storm and hadn't received much modification since. And though there is a lot to be said for doing things the old-fashioned way, today's technology has become a key contributor to preventing accidents like midair collisions and providing greater awareness of aircraft tracking. With airspace becoming more and more congested, there comes a greater demand for systems that can not only track every airborne vehicle, but also make other pilots aware of other vehicles in their proximity.

The Army began fielding of the RQ-7 Shadow unmanned



aerial system just after the turn of the century, with the aircraft seeing its first combat in the early stages of OIF. It brought the ground commander unparalleled situational awareness and knowledge of his operational environment with a live, round-the-clock video feed he could monitor comfortably in his tactical operations center. But the Shadow was a new concept, and everyone involved with it, including the operators on up to the UAS program manager, were still learning how to integrate it into the bigger Army aviation picture.

One area that truly needed attention was integrating the Shadow with other organic aviation entities. Until the advent and proliferation of systems like Blue Force Tracker, manned/unmanned teaming and Link 16, pilots of manned aircraft had to rely on gaining awareness of UAS from a flight-following agency that may or may not have any idea at all about the number of UAS in a given area and altitude.

Given the sporadic, rarely reported UAS operations that would take place in different areas, a flight follower's knowledge of UAS activity was sometimes very limited. Obviously this could set the stage for a very dire consequence if the airspace was not deconflicted properly, and this situation finally leads us to our story.

About 40 minutes into our return flight to FOB Speicher, I

passed the controls to my co-pilot/gunner so I could reference the tactical entry chart for Speicher's airspace. What surprised me as I slowly looked up to focus outside was the Shadow that was maybe 20 feet dead in front of our aircraft, flying only about 10 feet lower. It seemed incredible to me that of the four sets of eyes in our team that day, no one saw it until I did. By that time it was almost too late.

I told the CPG not to change anything, just to keep flying on the

"... today's technology has become a key contributor to preventing accidents like midair collisions ..."

same track and altitude. I radioed our wingman and, among some other expletives, explained we had narrowly avoided a midair collision and to look for the UAS as we flew over it. Our wingman had adequate spacing and was able to adjust his flight path to also avoid the Shadow, but we all agreed afterward that the outcome of a collision with an aircraft of that size would have been catastrophic, quite possibly causing an impact that could be extremely difficult to recover from, if not fatal. Needless to say, this became a topic of heated discussion among our company. Sadly, it was not the last near-miss with other coalition aircraft during that deployment, but it did heighten our awareness of this newly emerging hazard.

During our debrief, we reported it to our higher headquarters,

providing the exact time, location and altitude of the encounter. We found out many days later that one of the attached ground units based nearby was performing a check flight on their newly received Shadow. If there was knowledge of their sortie, it was simply never passed down to other aircrews (like us) flying in that sector.

It has been several years since that incident, and near-misses continue to this day. Of course, the risk of one occurring can never be eliminated, but systems like BFT, MUM-T and Link 16 are now incorporated into aircraft and TOCs.

Nearly all aircraft used by the military are now modernized and able to accommodate these systems, greatly enhancing pilots' situational awareness of other aircraft operating in their area.

In closing, our community has come a long way with the development of these over-the-horizon communications; they are especially critical to aircrews operating in remote areas of the operational environment. But always keep your head on a swivel. A digital cockpit would have provided us with some improved SA that day. Combining that with good crew coordination and safe operational practices will be essential to preventing close-proximity near-misses as we find ourselves sharing smaller chunks of airspace with a greater number of manned and unmanned aircraft. ■



Playing with Fire JEFF MILLER

Every July Fourth, Americans gather at parades, barbecues and other events to celebrate our nation's independence. Traditionally, fireworks are the highlight of these celebrations. All too often, though, the night ends badly due to someone's carelessness. Unfortunately, I speak from experience.

It was early in the evening and my friends and I were searching for something fun to do. We sent out text messages inviting other friends to come over to the house and eventually had a large crowd. So now what? We decided small explosives were the answer, so several of us piled into the car and headed to the nearest fireworks stand.

The fireworks at this particular stand were relatively inexpensive, which meant we were going to get a lot of bang for our buck. Almost \$500 later, it was time to head back to the party. We decided our neighborhood wasn't a good place to set off our stash, so we moved to a nearby field. (Author's note: There was no alcohol involved in the gathering up to this point.) A friend pointed out that the field grass was really dry, so this also wasn't the best location for our celebration. Regrettably, "management" gathered and decided we'd stay, and a small clay pit in the field would be our launching pad.



We started with the smaller fireworks, but the crowd was eager for us to bring out the big guns. This is where our problems started. The weather on this particular night was clear, but the wind was beginning to pick up. At one point, the fireworks sparked a small grass fire, but we easily extinguished it. Afterward, we should have used risk management, picked up our fireworks and

found a safer location, but, once again, management decided we would stay.

The next few rounds of fireworks went off without a hitch. Then a friend lit a firework that looked like a big sparkler. The sparks from the firework started another grass fire that quickly grew larger than anything we'd previously encountered. We tried to douse the flames with bottled water, but the fire continued to

FYI

To keep your Independence Day celebration safe, the National Council on Fireworks Safety reminds shooters of consumer fireworks of these important safety tips:

- Only use fireworks outdoors.
- Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
- Never give fireworks to young children.
- Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
- Always have a bucket of water, or water hose, nearby.
- Remember, alcohol and fireworks do not mix!



spread. To make matters worse, there were houses just 200 feet away. Long story short, my night ended with the sound of sirens, a burnt jacket, an ashy face and two lungs filled with smoke.

Fortunately, no one was injured and no property was damaged. Thanks to our carelessness, though, our night was ruined. We should have heeded our friend's advice and moved to another location, preferably one free of

weeds, shrubs, grass and other flammable materials. We also should have ensured we had a garden hose handy in case an errant firework sparked a fire.

Remember, when you play with fire, you might get burned. This Independence Day, use common sense and think about what you are doing. Fireworks are fun, but they can be dangerous if not used properly. ■

Sparkler Safety

Sparklers may seem like a safe alternative to other types of fireworks. However, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, about 16 percent of all consumer fireworks injuries are caused by sparklers burning hands and legs, with the majority of these injuries occurring to young children. Keep the following safety tips in mind when using sparklers:

- Always remain standing while using sparklers.
- Never hold a child in your arms while using sparklers.
- Never hold, or light, more than one sparkler at a time.
- Always wear closed-toe shoes when using sparklers.
- The sparkler wire remains hot long after the flame has gone out. Be sure to drop the spent sparklers directly in a bucket of water.
- Never hand a lighted sparkler to another person. Give them an unlit sparkler and then light it.
- Always stand at least six feet from another person while using sparklers.
- Never throw sparklers.

Source: www.fireworksafety.com

HERE IT COMES ARE YOU READY?

- Only use fireworks outdoors.
- Obey local laws.
- Always have a water hose or bucket nearby.
- Don't try to alter or combine fireworks.
- Wear safety glasses.
- Never allow children to handle fireworks.
- Never use homemade fireworks.
- Never relight a dud firework. Soak it in water after 20 minutes.

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?

ARMY STRONG: <https://safety.army.mil>



Know Your Tires

INSTALLATION SAFETY OFFICE
Fort Campbell, Kentucky

When was the last time you checked the air pressure in your motorcycle's tires? Do you even remember? Every year, riders are injured or killed in crashes caused by underinflated or neglected tires. Such tires decrease stability, limit traction and increase the danger of catastrophic failure. Too many riders fail to check their tire pressure until they notice their bike isn't handling properly. Waiting to that point, however, can lead to a disaster. Wise riders check their tires before every ride.

Motorcycle tire underinflation

Underinflation causes excessive sidewall flexing, which results in heat build-up inside the tire. Heat is a tire's worst enemy, making it more vulnerable to damage from normal road impacts and accelerates tread wear. Excessive heat can also cause hidden interior separations, leading to blowouts. As any rider knows, a blowout can cause loss of control and a serious accident.

Beyond that, low tire pressure reduces the speed at which a tire maintains full contact with wet roads. This is commonly referred to as hydroplaning and is a major hazard. The reason is underinflated tires have a larger footprint — area of tread on the road — which lessens the ground contact pressure.



This lessens the tire's ability to push water away from the tread while rolling over the road. Both motorcycle and car tires provide their best wet-weather traction when properly inflated.

Underinflated tires can also significantly affect a motorcycle's handling, causing a bike that might feel stable while going straight to handle unpredictably when cornering. As a rule, cornering with an underinflated rear tire will cause the bike to oversteer (turn more sharply than anticipated), whereas cornering with an underinflated front tire will cause the bike to understeer (turn less sharply than anticipated). Either situation can be extremely dangerous for riders. Whenever a rider notices his or her bike is beginning to handle strangely, it's a good idea to stop and check the tire pressure.

Motorcycle tire overinflation

Riding on overinflated tires can also be dangerous. Overinflated tires reduce riding comfort and stability and are more susceptible to cuts, punctures or damage by sudden impacts. Overinflation can also result in uneven tire wear and reduce the tires' contact area with the road, reducing the bike's traction while cornering.

Other vehicle tires

Proper tire inflation isn't just a necessity for motorcyclists; it's also important for the safe operation of your automobile, truck, trailer and recreational vehicle. Properly inflated and maintained tires improve the steering, stopping, traction and load-carrying capability of your vehicle. Therefore, you should maintain proper tire pressure,



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observe tire and vehicle load limits, avoid road hazards and regularly inspect your tires.

Because tires normally lose air over time, it's important to check your vehicle's tire pressure at least once a month. Tires can also suddenly lose air if you drive over a pothole or other object or strike the curb when parking. With radial tires, it's usually not possible to determine if they're underinflated by looking at them. For convenience, purchase a tire pressure gauge and keep it in your vehicle. Gauges can be purchased at tire dealerships, auto supply stores and other retail outlets.

When and how to check your tires

The recommended tire inflation pressure suggested by vehicle manufacturers reflects the proper psi when a tire is cold. The term "cold" does not refer to the outside temperature. Rather, a cold tire is one that has not been driven on for at least three hours. When you drive, your tires get warmer, causing the air pressure within them to increase. Therefore, to get an accurate tire pressure reading, you must measure tire pressure when the tires are cold or compensate for the extra pressure if they're warm.

Checking your tire pressure

Find the manufacturer's

recommended tire pressure for your car. This information is usually on a placard on the doorjamb on the driver's side (and it is also contained in the owner's manual). It might call for different pressures for the back tires and front tires.

FYI

Check out the Motorcycle Industry Council's Tire Guide on the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center's website at https://safety.army.mil/Portals/0/Documents/OFF-DUTY/PMV-2/PAMPHLETS/CHECKLISTS/Standard/MIC_Tire_Guide_2012V1.pdf.

- Check the pressure when the tires are cold as described above, or you can just check them first thing in the morning.
- Unscrew the valve cap and place it where you won't lose it.
- Press the tire gauge onto the valve stem. There might be a slight hiss as you press the gauge

down and as you release it. You only need to do this for a second or two to get an accurate reading.

• Read the tire pressure on the gauge. Compare the tire pressure readings you got with the specified amount called for by the manufacturer. If your

tires are not inflated to the specified amount, you need to fill them to meet the manufacturer's recommended air pressure.

Conclusion

It is important to manually check your tires' air pressure, visibly inspect them for wear and damage, and have them regularly rotated and balanced. Remember, when in doubt, consult a tire professional. After all, your life is riding on your tires. ■

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/>



Recipe for Disaster

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 BRENT BACHMAN
Williamsburg, Virginia

Author's note: In order to ensure this article receives maximum exposure, it contains no actual operating post call signs or crewmember names. As such, we shall call the OP the crew was tasked to resupply "Big Apple." It's on a cliff face, about 4,000 feet off the valley floor. Big Apple is typically manned by a small Army element and was notorious for being littered with trash.

It was just another night mission in Afghanistan. The aircrew was tasked with a slingload resupply in the Kunar Valley. This meant business as usual for our Chinook detachment, which typically completes this mission three nights a week. However, as we would find out, the events that would transpire on that mission were far from typical.

Our company commander raised his concerns about the litter at Big Apple to the squadron commander; however, it is hard to affect change without threatening to cancel missions. That was not deemed necessary as "nothing had happened yet," a flawed logic, especially when flying missions in a combat theatre. So the mission continued and only minimal hazard controls could be put in place by our aircrews. It turned out to be a



recipe for potential disaster.

Because of its location, Big Apple was to be the last slingload resupply of the night, and that was yet another contributing

"What had been a series of near misses turned into an incident and impacted our unit's operational trust of other units."

factor. As we approached the small drop zone with our external load, all members of the crew visually and verbally identified

the blowing sand and debris. The crewmember monitoring the load had the DZ in sight and was slowly calling the pilots forward.

Just as we crossed the protective barriers — BOOM! — the entire helicopter shook violently. The unsecured crewmember monitoring the load was thrown to the side of the airframe. Our flight engineer shouted, "We're hit, put it down, put it down," an intense task for the pilot on the controls given the DZ location.

The pilot in command was on the controls at the time of the incident. He was an experienced aviator and as ready as anyone could have been for this contingency. As the aircraft swung 180 degrees while drifting toward the landing area, the co-pilot began to start the auxiliary power



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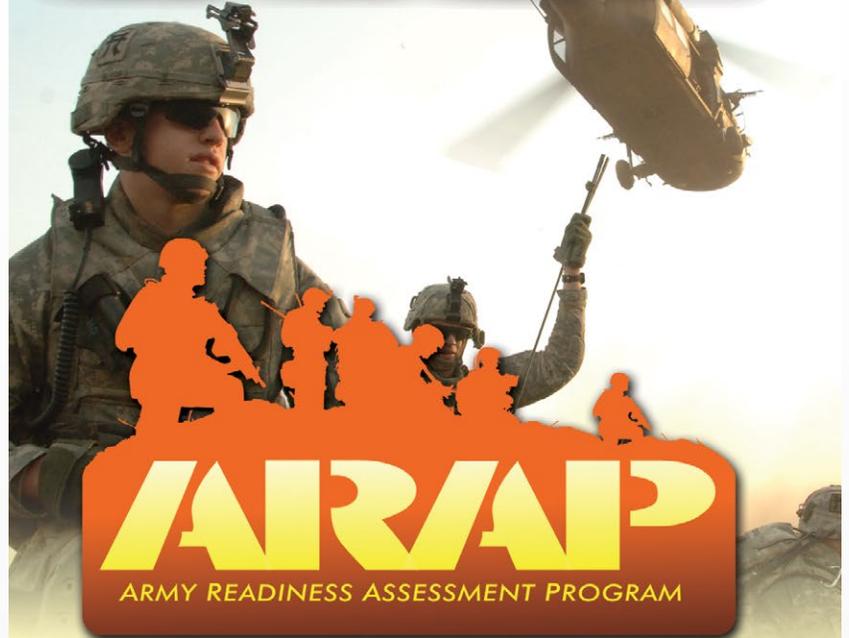
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unit to facilitate an immediate shutdown. Fortunately, the ground forces realized the aircraft was dealing with an emergency situation and cleared the landing area. Our aircraft touched down with a thud and the engines were shut down in seconds.

So, what was the culprit? An unsecured generator tarp and debris on the ground had flown through the 47's tandem rotor system. The aircrew was very fortunate to still be alive. Luckily, there was no damage to the rotor blades and the aircrew was able to self-extract once approval was given.

Needless to say, Big Apple, and all the other OPs under the control of that ground force, was litter free during the next mission. But it was too little, too late. What had been a series of near misses turned into an incident and impacted our unit's operational trust of other units.■

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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?

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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>



Nailed It!

CHAD GARDNER
Crane Army Ammunition Activity
Crane, Indiana

When I was 17, I spent a summer working in framing construction. My boss, Adam, was very experienced and knowledgeable, so I knew I was in good hands. The two accidents he said would happen to me were I would fall through a ceiling brace and I would tag myself with a nail gun. Adam didn't tell me how to avoid these accidents. Instead, he just said to be careful and not hurt myself too badly. I was determined to ensure his predictions didn't come true.

It was a July day like any other in southwest Missouri. When I arrived at work at 6 a.m., the temperature was already pushing 75 F. About lunchtime, Adam took a couple of other workers to look at a prospective housing site on the north side of Springfield. I was left alone with Derek, another worker who had six years of experience in the framing business.

For the past week, I had been working with a pneumatic nail gun and was getting accustomed to the tool's action. Adam had showed me how to use the gun and taught me the different sounds it made, such as when it's out of nails, a nail gets stuck in the gun or a nail has missed a board. I was pretty confident I could handle any of those problems.



After lunch the temperature topped 100 F, so I took off my shirt and got back to work. I climbed up onto a ceiling brace, looking into the garage, and started nailing support braces on the bottom and top of the set-up board. Each side of the board required a brace; however, because the garage had three beams that ran across its length, this was a difficult task. It was also risky for a falls because you can't really balance yourself on a board while using a pneumatic nail gun. I figured if I just reached over the set-up board and nailed the brace from that side it would be a lot easier. So I started nailing the board with the nail gun pointed back toward my body.

Pop!
Pop!
Pop!
Pop!

Shhhh!

I knew that last sound meant the nail had missed the board, so I put the gun down. I looked up at Derek, who was above me on the roof, and said, "I guess I missed."

Derek just stared at me wide-eyed. He then spit out his dip and told me to remain calm and still. As he came rushing down the roof toward me, I looked down to brush off my pants. But something else caught my eye. There, sticking out of my gut, was half of a nail. I'd really done it — I nailed myself big time!

Once Derek made it over, he grabbed me and his phone and rushed us toward his car. I asked where we are going, but he just told me to get in and lay down in the backseat. As Derek drove me to the emergency room, he called Adam, who thought he was joking. Derek was having



trouble describing what had happened and just told Adam to meet us at the emergency room. He then handed me his phone and said, "Call your mother."

"No," I screamed. "She will flip out. I'm fine. I don't want to bother her with this. It doesn't hurt and I'm not even bleeding. Derek, this isn't necessary!"

Derek then calmly reminded me of the situation. "Dude, you have a nail sticking out of your gut!"

"I knew that last sound meant the nail had missed the board, so I put the gun down. I looked up at Derek, who was above me on the roof, and said, "I guess I missed."

I called my mother and told her what had happened. As expected, she flipped — and not just out of concern, but also out of anger because of my stupidity.

When we arrived at the emergency room, I wasn't wearing a shirt. The nurse started to say, "Sir, you need a shirt;" but when she noticed the nail, what came out was, "Sir, you need ... uh ... we need a doctor ASAP!"

As I registered, the other people in the ER were just staring at this teenager with a nail sticking out of his stomach. When Adam arrived, he asked where I'd shot myself. I pointed to my stomach and

he stumbled back in shock. Derek and Adam had more than 20 years of experience combined, and this was the worst nailing they'd ever seen.

Eventually the nurse called my name and I was taken to a room. When the doctor walked in, he said, "Oh, dear Lord!" and then pulled out the nail. Surprisingly, there was no blood or pain. There was still an open hole in my stomach, but it didn't hurt.

The doctor ordered CT scan, which revealed the nail had missed my liver by about a half inch. It was at that point I realized the seriousness of the situation. I could have been killed. Fortunately, I survived to tell my story.

I learned some valuable lessons that day. First and foremost, always use common sense with handling power tools. I can't believe that I was so stupid to actually fire a nail gun toward me. Also, protective clothing and equipment must be worn at all times when doing construction. After all, sooner or later, everyone gets nailed. ■

FYI

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nail guns are the leading cause of injury among residential carpenters, responsible for an estimated 37,000 emergency room visits every year. Puncture wounds to the hands and fingers are the most common injuries, but more serious injuries, even deaths, do occur.

There are seven major risk factors that can lead to nail gun injuries:

1. Unintended nail discharge from a double fire
2. Unintended nail discharge from knocking the safety contact with the trigger squeezed
3. Nail penetration through a lumber work piece
4. Nail ricochet after striking a hard surface or metal feature
5. Missing the work piece
6. Awkward position nailing
7. Bypassing safety mechanisms

The CDC recommends employers take the following steps to prevent nail gun injuries:

1. Use full sequential trigger nail guns
2. Provide training
3. Establish nail gun work procedures
4. Provide personal protective equipment

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HERE IT COMES

National Safety Month
2016



CAUTION



**Slip away. Trip up.
Fall down.**

Whatever the case, you're out of the game.

READY ...OR NOT?

June is **National Safety Month**, and now is a great time to evaluate your personal risk for the year ahead.

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.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has the tools to keep you and your Soldiers safe, both on and off duty. Visit us online at <https://safety.army.mil>.

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



<https://safety.army.mil>



Learning From My Mistakes

DEL TINGLEY

Marine Corps Air Station
Beaufort, South Carolina

It was a beautiful fall morning in Beaufort, South Carolina. My roommate, Sqig, and I decided we'd spend this particular Saturday doing house and yard work around our "palatial" double-wide rented trailer. I knew this would be my last chance to help for a while because I'd be leaving the next morning for 30 days at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. Nellis is on the outskirts of Las Vegas, and it just wouldn't feel right to leave all the chores to Sqig while I was sipping on a rum and Coke at a blackjack table.

We started our inside cleaning about 9 a.m., opening a case of beer and cracking our first cold ones about five minutes later. Being young, single Marine sergeants, this was our established house chore SOP. By 11 a.m., we'd finished cleaning the bathrooms, dusting, picking up and vacuuming. We'd also finished off at least a 12 pack. It was time to move outside.

Sqig started mowing the lawn and I began edging and trimming. I finished first, took a beer break and then started raking. Sqig finished mowing and started bagging after



his beer break. After much effort and taking enough beer breaks to polish off the case, we finished the yard work. By then, it was about 4 p.m. and a few friends showed up. They were so impressed with our

"As he told me what happened, I realized if I'd been a few more inches to the left, my life would've been a lot different."

yard skills that they offered to share their bottle of bourbon with us. We accepted and the five of us sat on the porch passing the bottle and talking.

By 6 p.m., we'd emptied the bottle and one of our friends suggested we go to a local club. Sqig and I were up

for it. After all, seven hours of work while drinking a case of beer, followed by two hours of drinking bourbon — all on empty stomachs — shouldn't stop us. I took a shower and was getting ready to go when I remembered I

was supposed to leave in the morning. I told the guys to go ahead and I'd catch up with them after I got packed.

I went back in and started pressing my "cammies." I recall eating a sandwich in the kitchen, but the next thing I remembered was my alarm going off. A little confused, I turned off the alarm and looked around the room. I saw my neatly pressed cammies hanging on the doorknob and



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my seabag packed next to the dresser. I shrugged it off and got ready to go.

As I shouldered my bag, I knocked on Sqig's door and told him I was ready for my ride to the air station. I walked out to his truck, threw my bag in the back and then turned to walk back to the trailer. That's when I saw it — the driver's side of my car was scratched from bumper to bumper and covered with yellow paint.

I freaked out! I ran back in screaming, "Sqig, what happened to my car?" He said he had no idea what I was talking about. When I described the condition of the driver's side, he said, "That must be what you were talking about last night."

Apparently, I did make it to the club. Sqig informed me when I showed up I was slurring something about not being able to open my door. He had another friend drive me home in my car. I had to catch a C-141 to Nevada, so I didn't have time to solve the mystery. Sqig said he'd find out what happened.

The next afternoon, I called Sqig and he told me he'd figured it all out. He'd retraced the route we normally took to the club, which was mostly on two-

lane back roads. It seems on a particularly sharp right-hand curve I'd crossed the oncoming lane and gone off the road. It was there I'd sideswiped a yellow-painted metal barrier pole in front of a fire hydrant.

As he told me what happened, I realized if I'd been a few more inches to the left, my life would've been a lot different. I'd have been charged with DUI and missing movement. Also, I could've been injured or killed because I don't remember wearing my seat belt. Worse still, I could've hit another car and killed or injured someone else. I was lucky to have only done about \$1,000 worth of damage to my car. That was a small price to pay to learn a lesson from an event I don't even remember.

That was more than 20 years ago and I still live in Beaufort. The corner, post and fire hydrant are all still there too. I've pointed out the post, which is still canted at an odd angle and missing yellow paint on one side, to several friends and my children. I hope they learn from my mistake. I did. ■

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Be **SMART**. Protect yourself and those around you. The Army was built on discipline, leadership and regulations, and the regulation says someone has to ensure everyone in the vehicle wears a seat belt.

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Trust Your Training

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 TYLER KOWALSKI
B Company, 2nd Battalion,
228th Aviation Regiment
Fort Rucker, Alabama

When I found out my application for the Fixed-Wing Multi-engine Qualification Course was approved and I was selected to attend, I was very excited. However, I was a little apprehensive — not about the overall course, just one area in particular. Instruments, better known as instrument flying rules, means instrument flight planning and flying for pilots that are familiar with it and the references in the publications.

You may be asking yourself, “Why would a senior Army aviator be nervous about a specific area of flight?” First of all, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I have been an Army aviator since 2007, when I graduated from the OH-58D(R) course at Fort Rucker, Alabama. I have deployed multiple times over my career in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and to the Republic of Korea. I have flown numerous incident- and accident-free hours over that time period, but did not log much actual instrument or weather time. Enough about me, though; let’s get to the point of this story.

As I was saying, I was excited to start learning more about airplanes and how to fly them. I was coming from the scout



community, where our airframe was only authorized to fly under visual flight rules. It is not rated as an instrument-capable aircraft, so I was a little anxious about IFR. Yes, we flew some using instruments only, but it was for practice and we were not authorized to fly into the clouds. When we did happen to fly into the clouds, it was known as inadvertent instrument meteorological conditions and was an emergency because, as I stated earlier, our airframe was not rated as an IFR aircraft. So, you can see why I was a bit apprehensive, just because it was something I was not very familiar with and hadn’t done in quite a long while.

I had my first IFR training flight in an airplane on a clear blue 22 kind of beautiful day where you can see everything around you and on the ground. Needless to say, I was excited to continue my training the next day. When I woke up the next morning, I was not as

excited; turns out it was not going to be like yesterday at all, weather-wise that is. I got to the flight line for my pre-mission brief, and all I could see was areas of green and yellow on the radar. It was going to be one of those Alabama sunshine kind of days. You know, where it’s raining and you still need to wear your sunglasses.

It was a legal and approved brief to go fly our training period. I went to my aircraft assignment and was told I would be flying with a different instructor pilot from the one I flew with the previous day. So, as expected, I got a little more anxious about the flight — a new IP and we had weather moving in all around.

We sat down and did a thorough crew brief, especially since it was our first time flying together, covering all of our areas of concern for the mission, which was a Day 2 training flight. We conducted our preflight and got



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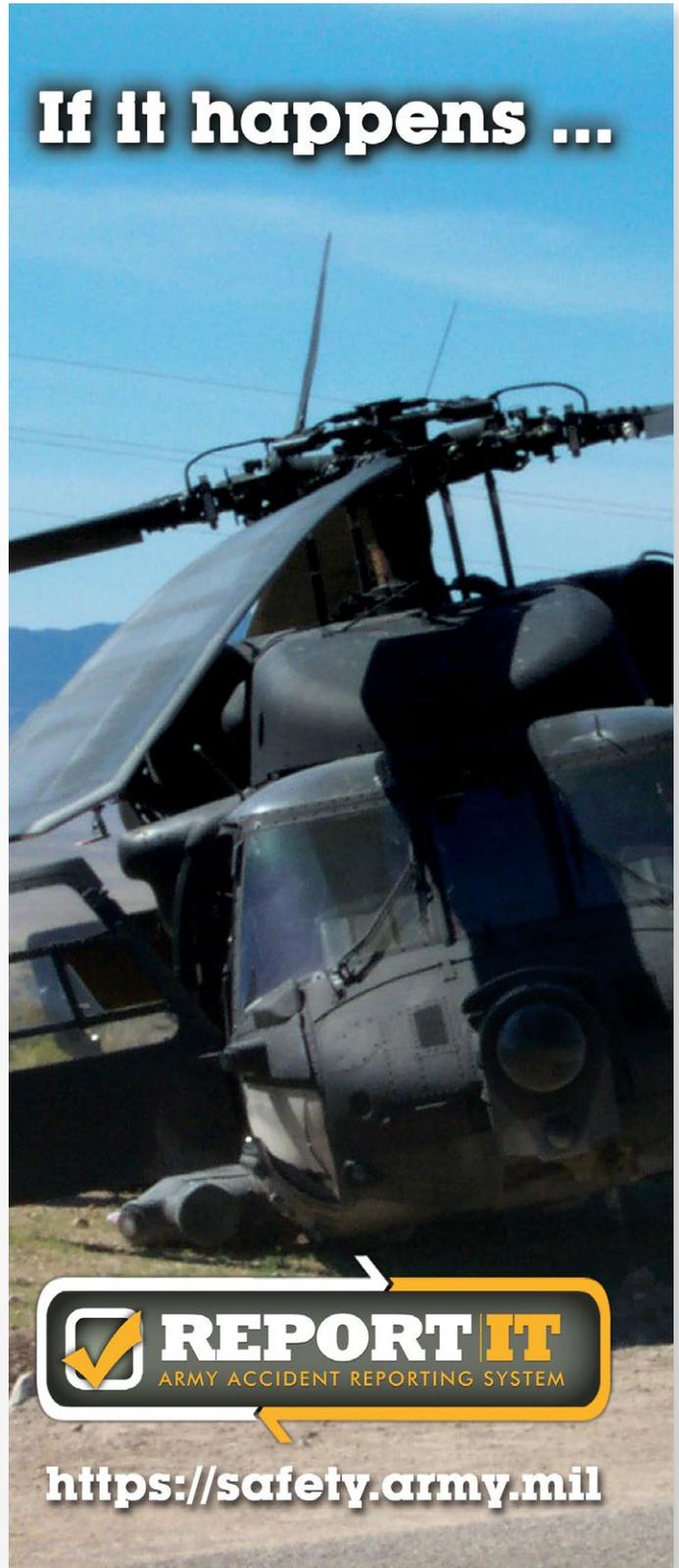
in the airplane and took off just as I did the prior day. This time, however, on climb-out I punch into a cloud deck about 1,000 feet above ground level and started flying based on my instruments. I hadn't flown actual weather time since flight school some eight years earlier. I was a bit rusty, but I did a good job, if I do say so myself. My IP may have thought differently, but he didn't tell me, so I'm going to say it was good.

As we continued our climb, we broke out of the clouds about 3,500 feet MSL and my IP told me to look outside. I will never forget what it looked like: there were cloud formations going in every direction and it was difficult to find the true horizon. I immediately got the leans, which is a form of spatial disorientation where a person cannot determine their position, attitude or movement relative to the Earth's surface. I told the IP what was happening. He said to try and fight through it and to let him know if I was unable to do it, if it got worse or I wouldn't be able to continue.

I fell back on my training and focused on the instruments. I then remembered a phrase I was taught early on: Never fly VMC and IMC at the same time. I continued to focus on the instruments and flew the aircraft in and out of the clouds without incident, even though I was still suffering through the leans. We continued our flight period and landed with a little over one hour of actual weather time, which seemed like an eternity to me at the time.

It was a long day but a great experience that showed me I retained my training from years earlier. It also reinforced my trust in the instruments, showing me they worked as designed. ■

If it happens ...





Running on Empty

MAJ. MIKE CRIVELLO
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

It was August in Tikrit, Iraq, and I was assigned to C Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment (Air Ambulance).

The unit's deployment had been extended from 12 to 15 months and morale was dim — at best. Eventually, though, a light at the end of the tunnel appeared.

With redeployment just two months away, I found renewed motivation to regain a high level of physical fitness before returning home. I started running three to four days a week on dirt trails just past the end of the runway. After a few weeks, I was losing weight, feeling great and my clothes were fitting more loosely. One of the greatest benefits I noticed was how much easier it now was to run to the operations center and aircraft for a medevac mission. My confidence started to soar and I was holding my chin a little higher.

Because of my newfound fitness level, I strived even harder. Running and getting thin became an obsession. Each day, I pushed harder than the day before. The fire within me became hotter with each step. Even better, others were noticing my weight loss and fitness level, which further fueled my desire to take it to the next level.

As anyone can imagine, it



was quite hot in Iraq during the summer, with daily temperatures reaching 120 F or more. The cockpits of the aircraft were easily 140 F while baking in the sun. On any given mission, the crew came back soaked from flying for an hour or more in the scorching sun.

I'd never experienced heat like this. When I was off duty, I would run in the mid- to late afternoon, which must have been close to the hottest part of the day. But that was hardly a deterrent. If anything, it made me more motivated. I was driven to lose more weight, so my mentality was "the hotter the better."

Occasionally, I changed up my cardio routine to ensure my muscles were getting the most from my workouts and started implementing sprints into my runs. I jogged for a short bit, picked an object about 25 to 30

yards ahead, sprinted to it and then returned to my jogging pace. It was during one of these sprints my obsession caught up with me. I was halfway to my chosen marker when it suddenly felt like someone had stabbed me in the right hamstring.

I was forced to stop in my tracks and nearly dropped to my knees. The pain was excruciating. I stretched for a short bit, trying to shrug it off, and then started to jog. But the pain wouldn't let me continue. I slowly hobbled back to the life sustainment area with my head hung low. With each step, I felt a shooting pain. I soon realized my goal of losing more weight and achieving a greater running fitness level was crushed.

Lessons learned

I guess any athlete has come to grips with setbacks because



of the body's limitations, but it was hard for me to accept my own humanness. I was determined to get back in the saddle as soon as possible and start training again. First, though, I had to evaluate why this injury happened to me.

Dehydration and overexertion were the primary contributors to my severely pulled hamstring. From the scorching heat, flying with 65 pounds of gear in a sweltering cockpit, continuous running and working out multiple days a week, it became clear my body was putting out more than I was taking in. My water intake was not nearly at the acceptable level for the amount of sweating I was doing. My body was running on empty. What's more, my stretching techniques were not adequate for the type of exercise I was conducting. My disregard for the temperatures while running in the hot sun further aggravated the situation.

I am now a firm believer in proper hydration and respecting my environment. Had I hydrated properly, I would have had a better chance of accomplishing my fitness goals. In addition, by switching my run time to early morning or dusk, when the temperatures dropped to more reasonable

levels, and taking the time to stretch more thoroughly, perhaps I would not have pulled such a crucial muscle.

The consequences of my actions directly affected my physical fitness regimen, weight loss and response time, but they could have been worse. I was able to continue my mission as a medevac pilot, but my response time "running" to the operations center and aircraft was drastically slowed. Fortunately, I never caused our aircraft to take off late when responding to a 9-Line.

I also could have been grounded, costing my unit a valuable asset as a pilot responding to lifesaving missions. I saw the consequences of my actions in multiple facets of my everyday life; but, even more so, I felt them. It was a hard and painful lesson to learn.

As Soldiers, we must maintain our bodies, physical fitness and mental alertness — not only for ourselves, but for our brothers and sisters in arms and our mission. Stay healthy, stay hydrated and accomplish the mission! ■

WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

THE LONE WOLF
The Thrill Seeker
THE GLOB HOPPER
The MOTOR vehicle enthusiast
SPEED LIMIT 35

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

BOSS

SAFETY FACTOR

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HERE IT COMES

are you ready for the heat?

- Implement work/rest cycles
- Hydrate properly to replace fluids lost through sweating
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals
- Avoid using salt tablets unless directed by a doctor
- Wear loose, lightweight clothing to encourage heat release



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.

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



ARMY STRONG:



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Dozing and Driving

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 WILLIAM BUSH

There is nothing quite like giving one of your friends a final sendoff before he ties the knot and enters married life. Back when I was an enlisted Soldier stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, one of my buddies was about to get married. We weren't going to let that happen without one last bang-up party. We got together and decided to take him to Austin after work that evening. It was a Friday (he was due to get married Sunday) and our platoon sergeant rented a 12-passenger van so we could all ride together. Having listened to my buddies brag about how much they were going to drink and party, I volunteered to be the designated driver. I wanted to make sure we all got back safely. The platoon sergeant showed up about 7:30 that evening with the van and began picking up everyone. He saved me for last, since I lived closest the highway entrance. Once I boarded the van, my designated driver duties began — especially since the guys in the back had already started drinking. With 15 of us in the van, the back end swayed like a drunken sailor and nearly



bottomed out with every bump. I gripped the steering wheel firmly, all the while wondering if the van could handle the weight. I pulled into a gas station and everyone piled out. You should have seen the looks the other customers gave us. My guess is

bought more beverages before climbing back into the van. It was party time again, the van's rear end bobbing as we drove toward Austin. When we got there, we had a blast. I monitored the other guys, making sure none of them got the bachelor into trouble.

It was about 4 a.m. when we decided it was time to head back to Killeen. Everyone else had passed out, so I rolled down my window to help me stay awake during the drive. The platoon sergeant was up front with me to

“My near-miss that night taught me a valuable lesson. If you're a designated driver, you have to do more than just stay sober — you also have to stay awake and alert.”

they were wondering how many people we'd managed to cram into that van. After hitting the bathroom, several of my friends

ensure we made it home safely and to have another set of eyes on the road. About 30 minutes into the drive, he fell asleep



and I started yawning. I guess I could understand since we'd done a five-mile PT run that morning and then worked all day. I needed some serious countermeasures to keep me awake. I rolled down the other front window and started freezing the guys in the back so I could hear them complain, whine and babble for my entertainment. Still, I was starting to doze off and realized I'd overestimated my driving abilities. I took a long blink and was startled by the sound of the tires running over rumble strip alongside the road. I woke up and saw we were headed toward the guardrail. As I steered back into my lane, I heard a comment from the rear of the van asking, "Are we there yet?" Somehow, we made it safely back to Killeen. I struggled to stay awake as I dropped off my friends. Once that was done, I still had a four-minute drive to my house. It felt like the longest four minutes I'd ever spent behind the wheel. My near-miss that night taught me a valuable lesson. If you're a designated driver, you have to do more than just stay sober — you also have to stay awake and alert. After all, it won't matter to the guardrail whether you're drunk or asleep. Either way, it can put your lights out — forever. ■

FYI

According to the National Sleep Foundation, there are several warning signs you are driving drowsy, including:

- Difficulty focusing, frequent blinking and/or heavy eyelids
- Difficulty keeping reveries or daydreams at bay
- Trouble keeping your head up
- Drifting from your lane, swerving, tailgating and/or hitting rumble strips
- Inability to clearly remember the last few miles driven
- Missing exits or traffic signs
- Yawning repeatedly
- Feeling restless, irritable or aggressive.

The NSF recommends the following tips to help prevent a drowsy-driving accident:

- Get a good night's sleep before you hit the road. You'll want to be alert for the drive, so be sure to get adequate sleep (seven to nine hours) the night before you go.
- Don't be too rushed to arrive at your destination. Many drivers try to maximize the holiday weekend by driving at night or without stopping for breaks. It's better to allow the time to drive alert and arrive alive.
- Use the buddy system. Just as you should not swim alone, avoid driving alone for long distances. A buddy who remains awake for the journey can take a turn behind the wheel and help identify the warning signs of fatigue.
- Take a break every 100 miles or two hours. Do something to refresh yourself like getting a snack, switching drivers or going for a run.
- Find a safe place to take a 15- to 20-minute nap, if you think you might fall asleep. Be cautious about excessive drowsiness after waking up.
- Avoid alcohol and medications that cause drowsiness as a side effect.
- Avoid driving at times when you would normally be asleep.
- Consume caffeine. The equivalent of two cups of coffee can increase alertness for several hours.

Source: www.drowsydriving.org

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>



HERE IT COMES

National Safety Month
2016

**It's National Safety Month.
Are you ready?**

**READY
...OR NOT?**

June is **National Safety Month**, and now is a great time to evaluate your personal risk for the year ahead.

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.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has the tools to keep you and your Soldiers safe, both on and off duty. Visit us online at <https://safety.army.mil>.

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



<https://safety.army.mil>