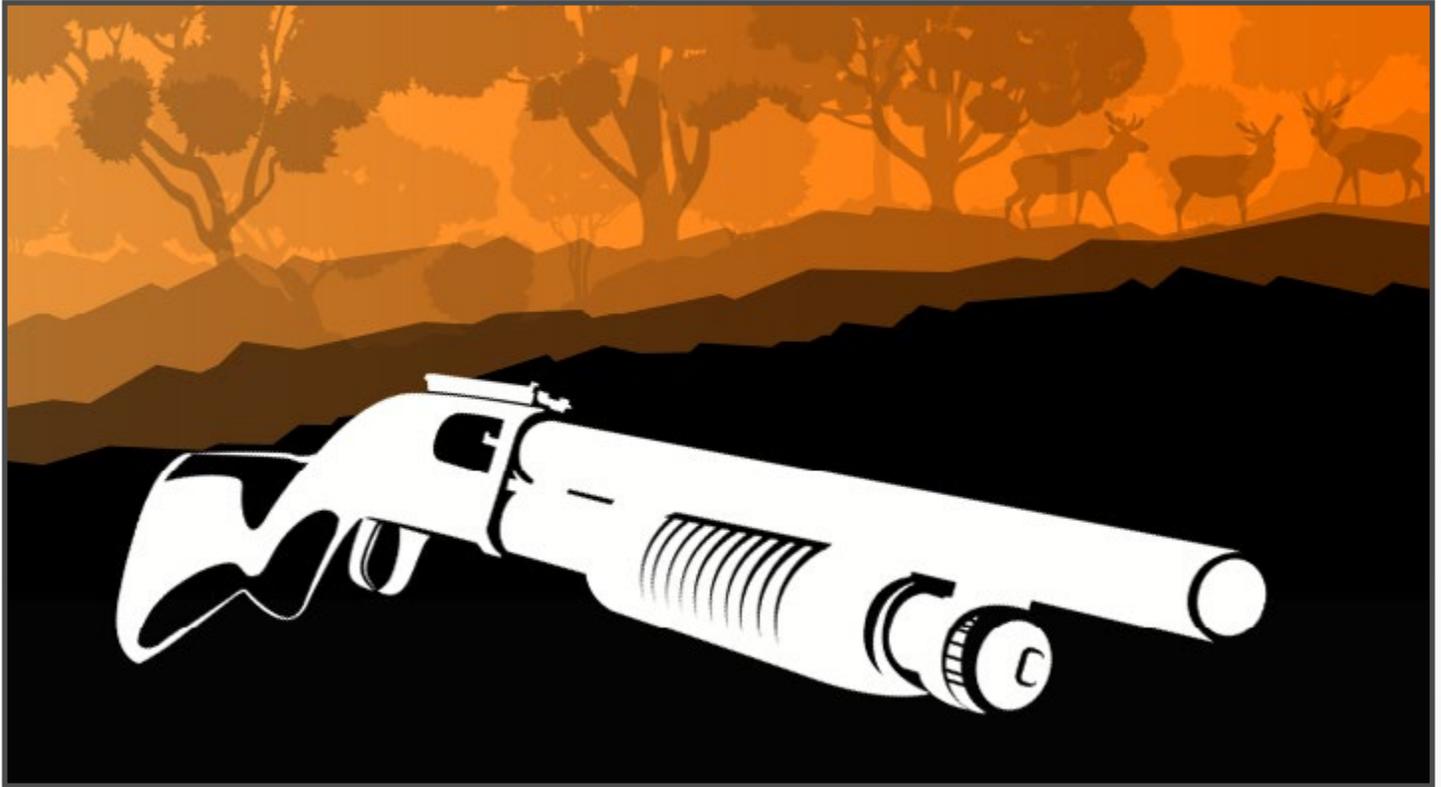




THIS MONTH OCTOBER 2016



“Dad, I’m Shot”

MASTER SGT. JOSEPH R. MORRISON
2nd Battalion, 233rd Regiment (Regional Training Institute)
Arkansas Army National Guard
North Little Rock, Arkansas

It was a Sunday like any other as a 15-year-old and his father prepared for a morning of duck hunting in central Arkansas. There was a nice chill in the early morning air with a slight fog coming off the warmer water. The decoys were out and the canoe was well hidden behind a blind. The only thing left to do was wait for the sun to rise and the ducks to start flying in.

The pair figured there would be plenty of time to bag their

daily limit and go home and clean up to make it to church for the 10 a.m. service. However, at 7 a.m., the young hunter and his father experienced something that would affect them for the rest of their lives. Although they both attended the Arkansas hunter education class together and the father had been deployed a few times, it was not enough to prepare them for what was about to happen.

The day started well, as a

couple of birds were downed and recovered. After the father downed another duck, the son excitedly pushed the canoe out to recover it. Like a lot of kids his age, he acted without thinking about everything he needed to do stay safe. He hung his shotgun on a nearby sapling but failed to put the weapon on safe.

Upon returning with the downed bird and stowing the canoe in the blind, the son was ready to resume hunting.

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FYI

In an effort to reduce weapons handling accidents, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center developed the Range & Weapons Safety Toolbox, available at <https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety>. Check it out today!

The father had just begun to work the duck call and get set for another volley when the unexpected sound of the son's shotgun pierced the morning air.

When the son attempted to grab the shotgun, he accidentally dropped it. As the gun fell to the ground, one of the sapling's limbs touched the trigger just enough to cause the weapon to fire. The son now laid covered in blood and mud, screaming out in pain, "Dad, I'm shot!"

After a quick evaluation, the father was able to pressure dress a gunshot wound that went through his son's left bicep/triceps area. They then made a frantic 20-minute canoe ride to their Jeep, followed by a 15-minute trip to the nearest emergency room. The son's wound was serious enough to require medical transport to a higher-level facility. The end result was a five-hour surgery to save the teen's left arm.

After six days of hospitalization came months of changing bandages on a still partially open wound

as it healed from the inside out. An additional surgery was required for a tendon transfer so the son could regain operating capabilities of his left hand, wrist and fingers, as the radial nerve in that arm no longer worked. Following three years of physical therapy, the son was fortunate to have the abilities and use of his arm that most people take for granted.

Since this accident, the son has shared his story with those enrolled in hunter safety programs. Also, he does not hesitate to encourage his friends and family members to know the specifics of firearms safety on any equipment they might operate. Sometimes, one person's close call can be another's best teacher. ■

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Mission Statement:

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.



Did You Know?

Self-inflicted gunshots are one of the most common causes of accidental discharge injuries and fatalities. These accidents can be greatly reduced by following the International Hunter Education Association's Ten Commandments of Safe Gun Handling:

1. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
2. Treat every firearm as though it were loaded.
3. Unload firearms and open the action except when ready to shoot.
4. Keep the barrel clear and choose proper ammunition for the firearm.
5. Be sure of your target before you pull the trigger.
6. Never point a firearm at anything you don't want to shoot.
7. Never climb or jump with a loaded firearm.
8. Never shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.
9. Store firearms and ammunition safely.
10. Avoid alcohol and drugs before and during shooting.

It is also essential you carefully plan your hunt.

Keep the following tips in mind for your next trip:

- Always let someone know exactly where you are hunting, who you'll be with and when you'll return. Leave a map with your hunting spots inside your vehicle so help can find you if you don't come home on time. Also, carry a cellphone or two-way radio, but be

aware that many backcountry areas do not get cellphone service.

- Always carry a survival kit in your backpack and restock it every season before opening day. A good survival kit should fit inside a small pack and weigh a little more than 4 pounds. A pocket in a backpack is all you'll need. Here are some items your kit should include:

- ◆ A lightweight nylon sweat suit in case you have to spend the night in the woods
- ◆ Waterproof matches or lighter
- ◆ Compass or GPS
- ◆ A sturdy, sharp knife
- ◆ Duct tape
- ◆ Water purification tablets
- ◆ Collapsible water bottle
- ◆ High-calorie food (candy bars) or beef jerky
- ◆ Nylon string or parachute cord
- ◆ Signal mirror
- ◆ Large handkerchief
- ◆ Ax, hatchet or portable saw
- ◆ Flashlight and back-up batteries
- ◆ Multipurpose tool

- Know how to survive. Take a course or read a book on techniques unique to your location. Know how to obtain water, food and shelter, with water being the most important. The smallest tip could save your life. Play the "what-if" game.

- Learn first aid and know how to use it on yourself if necessary. Practice self-administered first aid. You'll have a better grasp on your limitations and be able to react instinctively when seconds count. Also, be prepared if you know

there are poisonous snakes or if you have allergic reactions to insect stings or bites.

- If using a treestand, make sure you understand and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Select a live tree with a diameter that matches the requirement for your treestand. Before each use, inspect the treestand for loose, missing or broken parts. Also, always wear a safety harness when climbing or sitting in a treestand.

- If using an all-terrain vehicle, be sure you have taken a course in ATV safety, wear all necessary personal protective equipment and slow down so you have control. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are more than 800 deaths and 135,000 injuries related to ATVs each year. About one-third of those deaths and injuries are to children under 16 years old.

- Know your state's hunter orange requirements. Visit <http://www.ihca-usa.org/hunting-and-shooting/requirements/hunter-orange-requirements> to learn more. ■

THE RIFLE COMES



- Treat every weapon as if it is loaded.
- Handle every weapon with care.
- Identify the target before you fire.
- Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.
- Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

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>



A Mudder of a Fall

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 MATTHEW ROLAND
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Columbia, South Carolina

It was the beginning of fall, and my friend, Joe, and I planned a trip with the motorcycles we'd bought earlier in the year. Our bikes weren't new, but they were new to us and had all the power one could ever need. We decided to visit another Army buddy, Ben, in Charleston, South Carolina, which was about a two-hour ride from Columbia. We figured we could make the trip in an hour and a half — you know, since we were “expert” riders.

We liked visiting Ben because we could crash at his place and still be able to go crabbing, partying and sightseeing on our bikes without blowing a lot of cash. So, on a cool October morning, we set out for Charleston in our boots, padded pants, protective jackets and helmets.

Joe and I made it to Charleston in record time — about an hour and 40 minutes. So, not only were we speeding, we were drafting each other on the interstate. I don't say this to brag, but, rather, to show you our frame of mind about just how good we thought we were. Today, I wouldn't even think about riding that way.

When we arrived at Ben's house, everyone was glad to see us and commented on our bikes. It made us feel good! Our confidence was now at an all-time high. We eventually sat down for dinner



and caught up with each other. Everyone was having drinks except for Joe and me. We had plans to ride downtown later and knew better than to drink and drive. So, after dinner, Joe and I set off again, this time riding at a leisurely pace into downtown.

We parked our bikes on the street and hung out in beautiful downtown Charleston until the sun began to set. At that point we figured it was time to go because we weren't sure of how to get back to Ben's house. We hopped on our bikes and started heading in what we thought was the right direction but, of course, soon realized we were lost. Fortunately, a taxi pulled up next to us, so we asked the driver for directions. He told us to turn left and go over the James Island connector. We thanked him and sped off.

The James Island connector is a road that quickly rises and turns to the right before joining a four-lane highway over about a quarter-mile span. The speed limit on the connector road is 35 mph, but on a motorcycle you can easily take it at 50 mph-plus, right? Wrong!

Joe was out front and I followed behind, giving him enough room to maneuver. As he leaned into the right turn, his bike started edging its way toward the 3-foot outside barrier wall. I remember telling him in my head to slow down and turn sharper, but that didn't happen. Then I screamed in my helmet, “Lay the damn thing down, Joe!”

Joe's bike continued toward the outside shoulder in a right lean and then suddenly high-sided, catapulting my best friend over the wall, where he disappeared



into the darkness. As I hurried to see if I could spot him, I stopped myself and thought, "Do I really want to see Joe's lifeless, mangled body on the pavement below?" All traffic stopped and I heard a lady screaming, obviously witnessing the same thing I'd seen.

A guy walked up and asked me Joe's name. He then went over to the wall and yelled, "Joe!" Almost instantly we heard, "What?" I ran over to see if I could spot Joe. Luckily, there was no pavement below, just an enormous footing for the pillar that supported that part of the bridge. The footing was surrounded by pluff mud — a thick, sticky, malodorous goop found around Charleston's marshlands. Not only did Joe

miss the concrete pillar, the tide was also out, so he landed 90 feet below in the pluff mud, which cushioned his impact.

Joe didn't come out of this accident unscathed, though. He suffered scratches, bruises and a torn rotator cuff, which he still has trouble with today. As always, though, he was wearing all of his personal protective equipment, which likely kept him from suffering a catastrophic head injury.

Joe and I often talk about our adventures, but this trip tops them all. It's the night I could have lost my best friend. If there is anything we learned from this it's to never outride your capabilities. We thought since we'd taken

Motorcycle Safety Foundation training and had been riding for several months that we were now experts who were ready for any challenge we could face on the road. We were overconfident in our abilities, and Joe nearly paid for that mistake with his life. ■

FYI

Motorcyclists can avoid most hazardous situations by simply obeying the posted speed limit, especially in a curve. A rider should apply S.E.E. (Search, Evaluate, Execute) when operating their motorcycle and identify potential hazards. In a case where a motorcyclist is in a situation where they have either entered a turn too fast or are surprised by hazard in the road, such as a stopped car or debris in a blind turn, threshold braking is the method to use. Threshold braking is applying the brakes just prior to the point

of where the wheels begin to slip without producing a skid. On ABS-equipped motorcycles, you will feel feedback through the brake controls.

Motorcycle training curriculum covers emergency braking in a straight line and a curve, and these are the techniques to be used to avoid crashing if you are unable to maneuver around a hazardous situation. In the Basic RiderCourse, making an emergency stop in a curve requires the rider to use available traction for both braking and leaning. The rider

basically has two choices: One is to straighten up first before you emergency stop, but you must have enough space to complete the stop. The second option is to apply the brakes while leaned, which this must be done with progressive smoothness. As the motorcycle begins to straighten, more brake pressure can be applied.

Remember to always ride within your ability to control a motorcycle and attend the required follow-on motorcycle training required by Army Regulation 385-10.

HERE IT COMES

Ride Safe, Ride Long!



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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?



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Verify the Numbers

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5 CHRISTOPHER R. TENARO
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Our unit conducted a field training exercise during a drill weekend, and I was given an assigned aircraft to fly. On the first day, we conducted a health indicator test, or HIT check, which resulted exactly in the middle of the range on the HIT card. Crew chiefs sometimes take care of the logbook, if allowed, and “run the numbers” during the HIT check. This means the helicopter is run up, the HIT procedure accomplished and engine indications are compared with the HIT log to verify the engines are working properly.

For the first flight, everything went as planned and we flew the aircraft without any problems. Later that afternoon, we finished flying and performed preventive maintenance daily. The next morning, we preflighted the aircraft for airworthiness and were ready to go. During the run-up, we conducted the HIT check. The crew chief said, “That was a good HIT check, sir. We’re ready to go.”

I didn’t verify the numbers, having flown the previous day with the same crew chief and same aircraft. I replied, “Roger,” and drove on. We completed our flight home, conducted PMD and readied the aircraft



for the next mission.

As fate would have it, I was scheduled for the mission the next day. I asked the folks in operations to give me the same aircraft for that mission and they granted my wish. The next morning, we preflighted and were ready to go. Everything was the same except I got a new pilot and crew chief. We were a flight of two for this mission.

During our preflight mission planning, we noticed some early thunderstorms in the area that were slowly making their way toward the airfield. As we taxied out for the HIT check and departure, the rainstorms were quickly approaching. We deferred the HIT check until we reached our first destination, an airfield about 45 minutes away. What

made my decision was the fact I had flown this aircraft for the past two days and the HIT check was fine on both occasions.

We arrived at our first destination and, before shutdown, did the HIT check. I started with the No. 1 engine, got the numbers and, while waiting for the crew chief to run them, went on to the No. 2 engine. Imagine my surprise when the crew chief said, “That was a bad HIT check, sir, on the No. 1 engine.”

“Are you sure?” I asked. He said he was sure, so I asked him to read the numbers back to me. We were over on the HIT check by 3 degrees. I decided we would finish the No. 2 engine and then we’d recheck No. 1. We did the HIT check again and it barely passed by 1 degree. To



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top it off, the next thing I heard from the crew chief was, "It looks like it failed yesterday too."

Now I'm truly in disbelief. I shut down the aircraft and grabbed the logbook to look at the HIT check. Sure enough, the numbers the crew chief wrote down the day before showed the HIT check was over by 2 degrees.

I don't know why he said the numbers were good. What bothered me more was that I deviated from my normal procedure of having the crew chief read back all the numbers to confirm the HIT check. We had a 15-degree difference from the HIT check I did three days ago. Now what? We got the HIT to pass

within limits on the second try.

After a brief discussion, we decided to drive on with the mission since it was a short one. The only problem I had was the anxiety of a 15-degree rise in the HIT check. We completed the mission and returned home. Upon arriving home, I asked the crew chief to write up the HIT check as being within 5 degrees of failing. I then went and had a talk with the maintenance officer and relayed my concerns.

The next morning while going about my daily business, one of the mechanics came to me and said, "You have to come check this out." I followed him to the hangar, where he showed me

the answer to the HIT check mystery. The bearing in the inlet particle separator blower had failed, stripping the shaft that goes into the accessory gearbox. This failure manifested itself in the high HIT check.

The moral of the story is to pay attention to the HIT check and verify the numbers. Take a look at the previous checks and look for a trend or a deviation from the trend. One more item of concern: Remember the pilot in command of an aircraft is directly responsible for the operation of the aircraft and the safety of all personnel onboard. ■

If it happens ...



<https://safety.army.mil>



Deadly Currents

KARL ANDERSON
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Washington, D.C.

Overhead power lines are so common that we practically don't see them when we look down a road or walk around a building. Birds sit on them and pairs of shoes hang from them with no sparks, fire or other signs of dangerous energy. But contacting power lines is one of the most common causes of Army electrical accidents in both tactical operations and on base. It's probably because we see them all the time — without any fireworks — that we don't recognize the hazardous energy they contain.

I used to roof and paint houses. There always came a time when I had to work around the service entrance lines, the heavy cables bringing power into the house. At first, I avoided all contact with the wires, thanks to the local power company's school program and its flying cartoon light bulb that made me scared of them.

Of course, when you're working fast, there can come a time when you lose your caution. My hand would slip and I'd hit the wires with my arm. Fortunately, nothing happened. Standing on a porch roof, I backed into the wires and, again, nothing happened.

Eventually, I came to think that these wires were pretty safe to



touch, as long as they had that black insulation on them. I would push them, lean on them, lift them, no problem. I realize now the only thing protecting me was dumb luck — seriously dumb luck.

Let me tell you what could have happened through this true description of an accident investigated during my Army safety career. A painter put a metal ladder against the side of a base command building to paint around the service entrance cables. The lines were normal distribution lines — just 110 volts on the hot side, like you'd see in most neighborhoods in the United States. They had a typical rubberized black sleeve on them, which appeared to be in good shape. Where the overhead cables connected to the building wires, there were bolted connections covered with insulating putty. There was no metal visible.

It was a hot day, and the worker busily painted around the hangers holding the wire to the building. He then brushed paint in the tight area right under the hanger. Without warning, there was a dull pop and the worker fell from the ladder. Twelve feet isn't much of a fall and the worker survived, but he lost his arm. The pop was his arm basically exploding above his elbow.

During the site investigation, it was found that the insulating putty had been worn away from the edge on one of the bolt heads in the cable connection. The worker had accidentally touched this with the back of his hand during a brush stroke. Because of the hot weather, his skin was wet with sweat, allowing the power from the line to easily travel through his arm.

What saved his life — but cost him his arm — was that his bicep



was touching the metal ladder as he stretched to reach across it. The current jumped from his arm into the ladder and went to ground, but the heat caused by his body's resistance to the current inflicted an explosion-type exit wound. And no, he didn't stand there and shake, like in the movies. It all happened in one, maybe two seconds.

So what does this have to do with Soldier safety? About one-quarter of the Army's serious electrical injuries and deaths are caused by contact with overhead power lines. There is no completely safe way for a non-electrician to handle these cables if they are energized. The best you can do is stay away from them and call for the proper personnel. If you absolutely don't have a choice, use a non-conducting object (fiberglass pole, plastic pipe, dry wooden broom handle) to move them out of your way. When you will be in an elevated position, especially the top of a moving vehicle, plan ahead for this hazard and keep an eye out for cables.

Electricity kills or injures in three main ways. The first is by arc flash. On a small scale, if an electrical outlet is loose and won't hold a plug firmly, or if you don't push in the plug all the way, the loose connection can cause a very small arc that constantly jumps from the outlet to the

metal blade of the plug. This can build up heat quickly and cause a fire. Imagine the size of the flash when a larger power line arcs.

Several Soldier accidents happened when metal objects were accidentally or intentionally put into circuit-panel boxes. The resulting arc flash is like a localized ball of lightning. It can cause burns, vaporize metals that the Soldier inhales and transmit enough power through the body to kill.

“In many accident investigations, it looks like the hazard that led to the injuries or deaths should have been obvious to everyone involved.”

The second way you can be injured or killed by electricity is by the current running through your body and interfering with your nerves and muscles. By touching wires or energized surfaces, you can become part of the circuit. It doesn't take much power either. At 10 to 15 milliamperes (one-thousandth of an amp), your muscles can contract and you can't let go of an energized object. If you're exposed to that current for long, you can die, especially if the current is running

through your heart. If the current runs through major nerves or the brain, it can cause serious permanent injuries or death.

To keep current out of your body, stay well away from exposed, uninsulated electrical conductors such as open panel boxes. Insulation prevents conductors from contacting each other. Never attempt to repair a damaged cord with tape. Also, never use tools or extension cords with damaged insulation. Be

aware that when you're wet, your skin is up to 10 times less resistant to current than when dry, so avoid all electrical equipment.

The most important measure to protect you from becoming a path for electricity is to make sure all power systems are grounded. Grounding means that there is a wire or other conductive pathway that the electricity can

use instead of your body. Use a simple plug-in tester to see if your outlets are grounded. If they are not, stop using the outlets and notify the proper authorities immediately. Never use a three-prong (grounded) plug that has the grounding pin removed. Any equipment plugged into the cord can malfunction and you would not be protected.

The third way electricity kills is by causing internal damage and burns. When power runs through any conductor, the



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material has some resistance to the current. The resistance causes heat. If there is high current and high resistance, like there is in your body, the fast buildup of heat causes extreme damage that cannot heal. Many electrical shock victims who do survive lose whole organs or limbs due to internal burns.

As mentioned in the accident description above, this heat buildup can be extremely fast — so fast the water in the muscles turns to steam, expanding and causing explosive wounds. Protection against these injuries is the same; don't contact energized conductors and make sure grounds are in place.

In many accident investigations, it looks like the hazard that led to the injuries or deaths should have been obvious to everyone involved. It doesn't help the victim or their teammates to see this after the accident. What we all need to do is practice good risk management and evaluate all the hazards of a task or operation — even the hazards we see every day. ■

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A Blink from Disaster

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 EDWARD MCKIVER
U.S. Army Security Assistance Training Management Organization
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

There I was, a 19-year-old Soldier literally a blink away from disaster and saved only by the grace of God. The year was 1993 and I was a 19K armor crewman stationed in Vilseck, Germany. My unit had deployed to Kuwait for Exercise Intrinsic Action during the fall of that year. We were basically a guard-duty force sent to Kuwait to train with the Kuwaiti Army and provide additional security after Operation Desert Storm.

I remember it being a very trying time because, except for basic and advanced individual training, it was the first time in my young life I had been deprived of so many things I had enjoyed for so long. Fortunately, I was in a unit with guys I had known in basic training. This made the misery of being a private first class in a combat arms unit more bearable. My friends and I could not wait to get back to Germany and catch up on our partying.

We arrived back in Germany on a Wednesday. I remember the Soldiers' families greeting us and our company commander giving a speech highlighting the things we had accomplished, followed by a safety brief. As a young Soldier, I had little interest in the speech; I was only concerned about being dismissed. My friends and I had already discussed our game plan for the week, so the



word "dismissed" was, for us, the command of execution to party.

Within 30 minutes we showered, got dressed and were ready to go. My father was stationed in Germany before I graduated high school, so I already had my license to drive. This put me ahead of many of my buddies who were still trying to pass their driver's test. The unfortunate part of being the only one in your group with a license is you automatically become the designated driver.

We partied hard Wednesday and Thursday nights and planned to party into the weekend. Friday night, my battle buddy and I went to a club a couple hours away from our base. About 2 a.m., we left the club and headed back to Vilseck, knowing the drive home would be tough at that time of the morning. My battle buddy wasn't much help on the drive due to the

fact he'd enjoyed a few too many German beers. However, I wasn't concerned about the distance. I had driven it before and felt confident I could do it again.

Although I didn't feel sleepy as I drove, I knew I would sleep well when we got back to the barracks. That's when it happened — without warning I fell asleep behind the wheel. I felt the car vibrating and woke up on the opposite side of the road. The car had drifted across the lanes and onto an embankment. Upon realizing what was going on and hearing my buddy scream, I overcorrected. We went across the road and onto an embankment on the right side of the highway, which brought the car to a complete stop. After getting out and assessing the damage, we realized we could still drive the car and continued back to our base.



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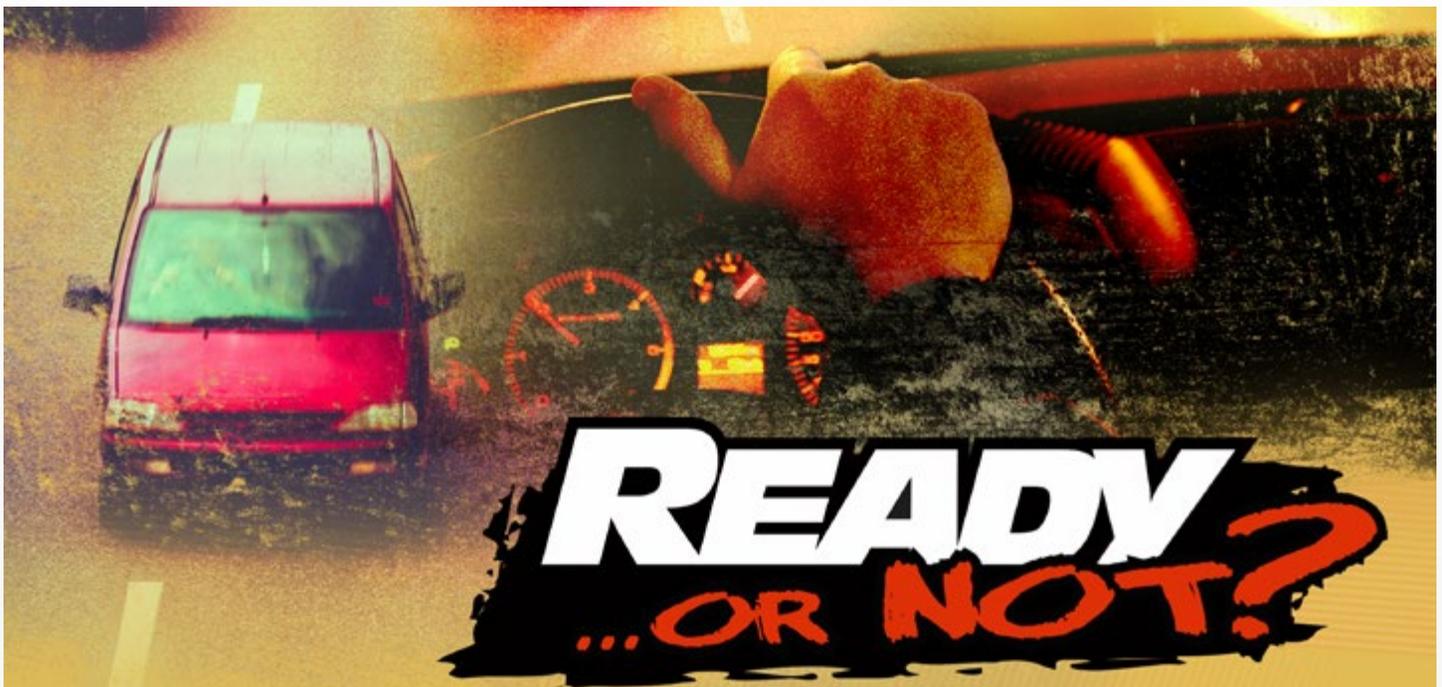
Upon driving the remaining five miles to the post, the military police stopped us and asked us a few questions about the damage and debris hanging from the car. The officer explained that even though he could tell I hadn't been drinking, he would still have to give me a sobriety test. We were taken to the MP station and each told to write an official statement regarding what happened. The

MP's only concern at that time was to ensure we were not involved in a hit-and-run accident or some other violation of the law.

My buddy and I spent about five hours at the station while the MPs verified our statements with the German police. Finally, we were allowed to leave. That night, my lack of rest, poor decision-making and overconfidence in my ability to drive tired

almost cost us our lives.

You always hear how important it is not to drink and drive. However, that's not the whole story. As I learned, driving any distance when you are tired is just as dangerous as driving under the influence of alcohol. The simple fact is if you don't get adequate rest before you drive, you may — after the accident — be resting eternally. ■



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



<https://safety.army.mil>



Announce Your Actions

RETIRED CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 ANTHONY LOWRY
Fort Irwin, California

The mission for the night, just like every night before, was to conduct security in and around the Baghdad airport. The airport was a busy place because of the number of aviation units departing and arriving in country. We had conducted this mission countless times with the same crews at the same time of night, so we were generally familiar with the area of operation and the mission.

I was a CW2 instructor pilot with 1,200 total flight hours and pilot in command of the lead aircraft in a two-formation flight. In the left seat was a warrant officer with almost 300 hours of total flight time. Seated in the right seat of the trail aircraft was another CW2 with about the same amount of flight hours I had. In the left seat was the company commander, who had about 900 flight hours.

Our team had been out about an hour and a half and was running low on fuel. We were on the west side of the airport and decided to return for fuel by intercepting the checkpoint on the southwest side, entering the traffic pattern and then landing at the forward



arming and refueling point. It was the standard entry procedure at that time. I monitored the tower frequency as we turned

“Had I not looked to the right before starting my turn to clear the aircraft, I have no doubt we would’ve had a midair collision and killed all four crewmembers that night.”

toward the airfield, awaiting the opportunity to contact the tower and let them know we were inbound for the FARP.

It was a busy night. We attempted to contact the tower several times but were interrupted

by other aircraft. We were about 1 km from the CP and had reduced airspeed from 90 knots to about 60 knots, but we could not get

through to the tower that we were about to enter their airspace. Due to the massive amount of radio traffic from other aircraft, the tower never heard our calls.

To avoid entering their airspace, we elected to make a 360-degree turn. I

told my left-seater I was going to make the turn to the right. What I did not know was the trail aircraft, in a free cruise formation, had lost sight of our aircraft in the lights of the airfield and couldn’t see we had reduced our airspeed. The trail



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aircraft had continued at 90 knots and caught up to our aircraft. Trail ended up on the right side of the lead aircraft at the same altitude and at a distance of about two rotor disks.

A split second before beginning my right-hand turn, I switched radios to tell my wingman I was turning right while simultaneously looking out my right door to make sure I was clear. As I looked right, I saw another aircraft at our 2:30, passing us and starting a left-hand turn.

My first thought was there's another aircraft I had not heard on the radio. However, then I recognized the pilot in the left seat and knew he was my wingman. I made a hard left turn and said something over the radio to our wingman that I don't remember, but I know it was not in keeping with proper phraseology. We linked back up with each other and finally landed at the FARP without further incident.

Lessons Learned

Crewmembers are always briefed on crew coordination, specifically "announce actions," before every mission; however, it isn't always briefed from aircraft to aircraft. I made the mistake of not communicating with my wingman that I was reducing airspeed, and our wingman made the mistake of not informing us when they lost sight of the lead aircraft. Had I not looked to the right before starting my turn to clear the aircraft, I have no doubt we would've had a midair collision and killed all four crewmembers that night.

This incident served as a wake-up call. From that night on, when one of our aircraft did something that was either not briefed or out of the norm for the situation, we made sure we announced our actions first to the entire flight and not just the crewmember sitting next to us. ■

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How Do I Get Out of Here?

COMPILED BY THE KNOWLEDGE STAFF

We see exit signs inside buildings all the time, but many of us don't give them a second thought. If there was a fire or other emergency and you had to make a quick exit from a building, would you know where to go?

Creating an emergency exit strategy probably isn't at the top of your to-do list. Yet, every day, people lose their lives because they're unable to get out of a burning structure. As you look around your home or office, you might think that you wouldn't have any problem finding your way to safety. But what if your normal exit is blocked by flames? What happens if you become disoriented in the heavy smoke? Will you still be able to make it out of this situation alive?



teams of firefighters entered the building to conduct a search and rescue of the first team, but they, too, became lost inside the maze of doors, hallways and windowless rooms.

All six firefighters died in this fire. Think about that. Six highly trained career firefighters who fully understood the nature of the situation were unable to exit a building they had entered just minutes earlier. If it happened to them, you better believe it could happen to you.

Consider all the places you visit throughout the day — the office, supermarket, warehouse supercenters, hotels, restaurants and motorpools. Do you always know where to find the closest exit? Do you know of an alternate exit if your first choice is too crowded or blocked?

How long would it take you to find an emergency exit when you're in a state of panic

inside a room full of smoke and desperately gasping for air? Would it take 15 seconds? How about 30 seconds? Longer? Next time you're in one of these places, see if you can locate an exit sign. Remember, every second counts in an emergency and every hesitation reduces your chance of survival.

There are a variety of regulatory requirements for the design and construction of exit routes, doors, stairs and lighting and multiple actions we can all take to ensure the components of an exit route are maintained and operational, including:

Exit routes

- Ensure exit routes are free and unobstructed by materials, equipment, locked doors or dead-end corridors.
- Keep exit routes free of explosives or highly flammable furnishings and other

Did You Know?

The National Fire Protection Association has designated Oct. 9-15 Fire Prevention Week. For more information, visit www.nfpa.org/fpw.

Exiting a burning building can even challenge those who fight fires for a living. On the night of Dec. 3, 1999, in Worcester, Massachusetts, two firefighters who responded to a warehouse fire became disoriented while searching the building for homeless people. Two additional



decorations (i.e., don't store a flammable cabinet in an exit hallway or next to the door).

- Arrange exit routes so employees will not have to travel toward a high-hazard area unless the path of travel is effectively shielded from the high-hazard area.
- Maintain exit routes during construction, repairs or alterations.
- Designate an assembly area

Exit doors

- Mark doors or passages along

FYI

Army Regulation 385-10, The Army Safety Program, chapter 18-15, Exit and Egress, states that "exits and egress will meet the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.33 through 29 CFR 1910.39, Subpart E; fire prevention plans; and The Life Safety Code (NFPA 101)." For more information on exits and emergency exit lighting, consult your local safety office and the following references:

- 29 CFR 1910 Subpart E – Means of Egress
- NFPA-101, Life Safety Code®, 2009.
- UFC 3-600-01, Fire Protection Engineering for Facilities, chapter 2-5, Means of Egress

an exit access that could be mistaken for an exit as "Not an Exit" or with a sign identifying its use, such as "Closet."

- Keep exit route doors free of decorations or signs that obscure their visibility.
- Ensure emergency exit doors are unlocked when the building is occupied and panic bars operate properly.
- Indicate exits with wheelchair access.

Testing Emergency Lights and Exit Signs

Unfortunately, emergency lighting equipment is often installed and forgotten until a power failure. Testing of emergency lighting equipment is required by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)-101, Life Safety Code®, section 7.9.3, Periodic Testing of Emergency Lighting Equipment: "Functional testing shall be conducted monthly with a minimum of 3 weeks and a maximum of 5 weeks between tests, for not less than 30 seconds. . . . Functional testing shall be conducted annually for a minimum of 1 ½ hours if the emergency lighting system is battery powered. Written records of visual inspections and tests shall be kept by the owner for inspection by the authority having jurisdiction."*

Most emergency lights or exit signs have a small "push-to-test" button somewhere on the casing. To test your equipment, push and hold the button for 30 seconds to test the bulbs and battery. The lights should come on and remain at the same brightness level for the full 30 seconds. It's important

to test for the full 30 seconds to ensure the batteries have more than just a surface charge. Submit a work order if the light dims right away or if some of the bulbs don't work. Remember to record your inspection.

To conduct the 1½-hour annual tests, it may be easier to throw a circuit breaker and observe the lights for 90 minutes. You may want to ensure that you first saved any computer data if they are connected to the same circuit. In some larger buildings, such as a hospital, emergency power for emergency lighting and exit signs is provided by a generator that is tested on a monthly basis by a full-time building maintenance staff. For additional support, contact your local safety office or fire inspector.

**The test interval is permitted to extend beyond the 30-day interval with the approval of the authority having jurisdiction and with the completion of an evaluation of 21 additional criteria found within the Life Safety Code.*

Exit lighting and signage

- Provide adequate lighting for exit routes.
- Post signs along the exit access indicating the direction of travel to the nearest exit, especially if that direction is not immediately apparent.
- Perform monthly and annual tests on emergency lights and exit signs.

When time is critical, you don't want to waste it searching for the nearest exit. Have a plan in place. When disaster strikes, don't get stuck yelling, "How do I get out of here?" ■



Weather Bugged

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 KRISTOPHER A. PHILLIPS
B Company, 224th Military Intelligence Battalion
Fort Stewart, Texas

I'm what you'd call a 50-50 rider. If the chance of rain is greater than 50 percent or the temperature is lower than 50 F, I prefer not to ride. The temperatures at Fort Hood, Texas, had been consistently above 50 F for the last few days, so I decided to skip checking the weather and just ride into work. After all, since each day had been a little warmer than the previous one, why bother? Well, wouldn't you know it, Mother Nature decided to play a trick on me.

I conducted my "accu-window" weather check and confirmed it was clear, blue and 22, so I grabbed my motorcycle personal protective equipment and suited up. After telling my wife goodbye, I mounted up and headed for work.

I got to the office and was greeted with a few "Hi's." When I took off my PPE and turned around, I saw the company rider-mentor looking at me curiously. He asked, "Did you ride in today?" For a moment I thought of telling him, "Nope, I'm just wore my PPE today so I could break it in." But after some consideration, I decided to play it safe and answered, "Yep, I rode in."

It was at this point he decided it was a good time to inform me of my error of not checking The Weather Channel. Apparently



the 55-60 F temperatures of the past few days were not to be today. The forecast was calling for temperatures in the low 30s by 10 or 11 a.m., with rain and

"This experience taught me to always check the weather from a respectable source before heading out to ride."

a chance of snow afterward.

Instead of immediately heading back home with my tail between my legs to fetch my SUV, I decided to wait until lunch. However, after lunch we were to meet at

a theater on the main post for a briefing and then be released. The theater was only about 10 minutes from the hangar and from there it was only another

10 minutes to home. I figured I could ride slowly on post to reduce the effect of the wind chill on my body. Boy, was I about to be surprised!

We headed to lunch a little before 11 a.m. to get a head start on the traffic. The weather was still bearable enough to ride straight home and

swap vehicles, but I opted to go out with the guys for lunch. This was my second chance to go home and swap vehicles. Instead, I decided to tough it out.

While we were eating lunch,



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the sky fell. As we headed for the theater, I was given a third opportunity to avoid riding in the rain and cold, when one of my buddies offered to give me a lift. Since it was only a short distance, I decided to ride.

I got to my motorcycle and waved to my buddy as he took off for the briefing. As I mounted my bike, I thought, "Man, it is cold!" However, now I was stuck with my decision.

I'd barely pulled out when I was already drenched, but I kept telling myself, "I can do this." I got about halfway to the theater when I lost feeling in my hands. The rain had also pooled between the gas tank and my legs and was starting to freeze, which was a very uncomfortable feeling to say the least. At that point I decided to go straight home, change into some dry clothes and get warm before hypothermia set in.

This experience taught me to always check the weather from a respectable source before heading out to ride. After all, I'd never take off on a flight without backing up my "accu-window" forecast with an actual weather briefing. The same thing always goes for riding. ■



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/>



Fat, Dumb and Happy

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 STEVEN T. SUND
C Company, 4th Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment
Camp Humphreys, Korea

There I was on a multiship day visual flight rules cross-country mission somewhere over the middle of North Carolina. I was a company maintenance test pilot flying an AH-64A on my second tour at Fort Bragg, and I felt comfortable flying in the local area. We were positioned in the middle of the formation, the weather was fine and my co-pilot/gunner had the controls in the front seat. We were flying along fat, dumb and happy.

As I performed Task 1026, Maintain Airspace Surveillance, from Training Circular 1-238, I noticed the aircraft had suddenly developed a one-to-one vertical bounce, accompanied by the CPG saying, "What the hell was that?" I looked out the window and saw one rotor blade flying about four inches below the others.

The aircraft then started vibrating severely up and down. I took the controls from the CPG and quickly checked controllability. All the controls seemed to be working normally and the vibration levels hadn't changed. I announced to the flight I was having a problem and told my CPG to find the nearest airport.

Just as the CPG pulled the map out, another aircraft in the flight



said, "There's an airport at three o'clock, about four miles away."

I called, "Roger, turning right," and almost immediately sighted the airfield.

Now, I know you're probably wondering why I didn't put it down right there. Well, I strongly considered it. There were plenty of open fields between the airfield and me. I guess it was the MTP in me thinking that if the aircraft needed a new blade, I had to make sure our maintainers could get a truck to the aircraft. I also discounted the possibility of a flight control malfunction since the controls still worked normally. I decided to continue to the airfield with the option of landing immediately if the vibration level increased.

On final approach, I saw a National Guard maintenance facility adjacent to the runway,

so I landed directly to their taxiway. As soon as I brought the power levers back, the CPG said, "Something just came off one of the blades!"

After finishing our shutdown, we recovered half of a main rotor tip cap that had landed about 50 feet in front of the aircraft. As we looked at it, we noticed the metal on the leading edge was paper thin. Evidently, it had eroded enough that the air could enter and strip the top and bottom off like a banana peel.

Lessons learned

The important question is, "What have I taken away from this experience?" Obviously, I pay a lot closer attention to main rotor tip caps on preflight than I did before. I also try to consider how being a maintainer influences my decision-making process.



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Figuring out how to recover a downed aircraft is something a maintenance officer does on a regular basis, but choosing a landing site during an emergency based on ease of access for repairs wasn't the smartest thing to do. I should have landed immediately — preferably straight ahead into the first open area we saw.

We were lucky. Accidents often begin with a common-error chain of events. Should you need to make an off-airport landing, be extremely cautious and ensure no obstacles such as poles, wires, trees, low-level brush and buildings are in your path. The best way to handle these obstacles is to remember slow is good and slower is better. Going slow gives you the ability to see what you're flying into in case you need to abort or alter the landing.

Never be so committed to a planned flight that you refuse to alter it when an emergency happens. The next time you're flying along fat, dumb and happy, remind yourself that good judgment will keep you alive. ■

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Seeing is Believing CRAIG LAURENSEN

While working in the motor pool one day at Fort Hood, Texas, I heard people yelling and running toward the gate. The buzz of activity got me curious, so I went to see what was happening. I couldn't tell what was going on when I got to the gate, but I later found out a sergeant in my company had burned his eyes. Apparently he'd been working on a HMMWV battery when it exploded, splashing acid into his face. After this incident, we were all briefed on the importance of wearing our personal protective equipment.

As it turned out, the sergeant was all right and his eyes weren't damaged permanently. He did say, however, it burned like nothing he had ever experienced. I took this in, but I figured it would never happen to me. Boy, was I wrong!



deal. By that point, I'd also forgotten about the incident at Fort Hood.

As I stood in my driveway and tried to pry off the battery cap, it suddenly broke free. It all happened

into the house. My wife told me to flush my eye for 15 to 20 minutes, which was awful. We then went to the doctor's office, where they put dye in my eye and used a black

“From now on, whether at work or home, eye protection is another necessary tool I'll use to complete the job safely. You should wear it too.”

Six years later, while stationed at Fort Drum, New York, I was working on my car battery. Although I always wore PPE to protect my eyes and ears when I mowed the lawn or worked with power tools, it never crossed my mind to wear it while working on my car. No loud noises, no big

so quickly that I didn't have time to turn my head. I had a déjà vu moment as I felt my eyes burning like you wouldn't believe! Yep, I'd gotten battery acid in my eye just like that sergeant did a few years earlier.

I couldn't see, so I felt my way through the garage and stumbled

Did You Know?

Because more eye injuries occur in and around the home, Prevent Blindness America has declared October as Home Eye Safety Awareness Month to help educate the public on steps that can be taken to avoid painful and costly injuries. For more information on home eye safety, visit PreventBlindness.org/eye-safety-home.



light to check for injuries. I was lucky — my eye wasn't scratched. The doctor said flushing it right away had been a good thing and probably helped prevent a more serious injury.

I couldn't believe this accident happened to me. I consider myself fortunate that it only resulted in a scary lesson learned and not permanent damage to my eye. I now make it a point to wear eye protection whenever I work on my vehicle. The funny part of this story is I was getting my car ready for the drive to Fort Rucker, Alabama, to take the Aviation Safety Officer Course!

From now on, whether at work or home, eye protection is another

FYI

When working on your vehicle's battery — or performing any other task that involves dangerous fluids — take the following precautions:

- Always wear eye protection.
- Wear rubber gloves to protect your hands.
- If you need corrective lenses and handle batteries often, wear prescription glasses, not contacts.

- Do not smoke, have open flames or make sparks around a battery. Batteries emit an explosive gas.
- Make sure the vent holes in the vent caps are open to prevent a dangerous buildup of gasses.

necessary tool I'll use to complete the job safely. You should wear it too. What do you have to lose — other than your vision? ■

Protecting Your Eyes

There really is much to be said about protecting your eyes and you'd be foolish not to do so at all times. While the original eye protection devices were somewhat limited, today there are styles for every type of exposure. Many tasks require that workers wear eye protection, including, but not limited to:

- Chipping, sledging and hammering metal, stone or concrete
- Use of manual, pneumatic and power impact tools
- Caulking, brushing and grinding
- Drilling, scaling and scraping
- Babbitting, soldering and

casting hot metals

- Handling acids, caustics and creosoted materials
- Gas welding, cutting and brazing
- Drilling overhead
- Working in excessively dusty environments
- Electric arc welding and cutting and other operations that expose the eyes to flying particles, dust, hot liquids, molten substances, gases, fumes and liquids

Some people just don't like to wear safety glasses and goggles. One complaint is goggles tend to fog up. Fogging happens when sweat vaporizes and coats the

inside of the lens. If you have this problem with goggles and glasses, wear a handkerchief or sweatband around your forehead to keep perspiration out.

Another complaint is eye protection devices are uncomfortable, but usually this is because the eye protection device does not fit properly. Make sure you have the device properly adjusted for the correct fit or simply get another that fits better. You can see a lot better out of a properly fitted eye protection device that you can out of a glass eye.



Snowplowed

TIM MCLAUGHLIN
Port Deposit, Maryland

After spending six years in Alaska, I thought winter driving at Fort Drum, New York, would be a snap. After all, I'd seen my share of accidents and figured I was prepared for anything. But it only took a week to show me I was wrong.

It was October and the lake effect snow had kicked in a month early in New York. The roads quickly became hazardous as plummeting temperatures caused black ice to form throughout the evening. I'd been out that day hunting with a friend from Fort Drum and we were headed home in my four-wheel-drive pickup.

As it got dark, the temperature dropped. My first thought was to just slow down and take it easy. I figured the other drivers were used to these conditions, so getting home shouldn't be a problem. I was to find out, however, to never assume other drivers know what they're doing or are thinking about safety.

I'd only driven about two miles from our hunting spot when I rounded a corner to find an oncoming vehicle skidding into my lane. I'd taken the precaution of driving slow and paying close attention to my surroundings. That paid off. I steered into a snow bank on the side of the road to avoid colliding with the out-of-control car. The driver regained control just at that moment and



continued down the road.

But now I was in trouble. I'd lost control when my pickup plowed into the snow bank. After what seemed like minutes — but was probably only seconds — my truck jumped the snow bank and landed in a ditch, coming to an abrupt stop. I checked myself and my friend. We were both wearing our seat belts and were all right. After that, we got out to see if the truck was damaged. It didn't appear to be, but now we were stuck in 3-foot-deep snow.

Even using my four-wheel drive, I couldn't get out of the ditch and back over the snow bank. Fortunately for us, after about a half hour a truck came by and the driver used a chain to pull us back onto the road. The good Samaritan then left, refusing to accept anything other than a

thank you and a handshake.

The importance of driving safely had really set in for me by this time. We still had about 10 miles to go before we'd be home and out of the hazardous driving conditions. We'd made it about halfway when snowplows started approaching in the oncoming lane. I immediately slowed down and began watching for them. One was just rounding a corner ahead when a Honda Accord blew past me. I knew the driver was going way too fast for the conditions. She saw the snowplow, but couldn't get back into her lane and smashed into it.

I was very close to the accident. Several pieces of the Honda flew off and hit my truck as it spun across the road, shedding parts and landing in a ditch. I stopped and quickly checked



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the snowplow operator for injuries. He was OK, so I turned my attention to the young woman in the Honda.

As I approached the car, she looked up at me. I noticed her nose had been split all the way to the bone, her left eye was cut and she was badly bruised on her chest and neck. She told me “everything hurt” and asked if she looked OK. I told her that while she was cut and bruised, she’d be fine.

I tried to talk to the woman as much as possible as we waited

for the ambulance. What really struck me was what she said about the accident. She told me she was from South Carolina and had never driven in snow. She had been skiing all day and, although she felt too tired to drive, she was in a hurry to get home.

This accident shouldn’t have happened — and it probably wouldn’t have had the woman just done a quick risk assessment of her situation. The point is simple — never try to convince yourself that “it won’t happen to me.” Don’t, like me, let your overconfidence

make you vulnerable someone else’s mistakes. Don’t, like the young woman, assume you can just afford to ignore the threats in your environment. Safe driving is a year-round commitment. ■

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REDUCE ACCIDENTAL LOSS.
INCREASE COMBAT POWER.**

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<https://safety.army.mil>



Fly the Aircraft

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2 FRANK KIRBY
C Company, 3-1 Assault Helicopter Battalion
Fort Riley, Kansas

It was early 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom and I was flying as the tail gunner on a CH-47D Chinook. We were doing a troop movement from Camp Doha, Kuwait, to Balad, Iraq. At the time we were still flying terrain flight altitudes due to radar threats, so the crew had to be proactive in identifying hazards to flight such as power lines and towers.

We had a pretty experienced crew with an instructor pilot, pilot in command, standardization instructor, flight engineer, crew chief and myself. I was in progression training on the tail gun with the flight engineer of the aircraft.

The flight was going as planned until we got over Baghdad. The pilots got into a discussion about where we were on the map because back then we did not have moving maps. The two were disagreeing about our location and both of them were focused inside the aircraft. Luckily for the entire crew and personal onboard, our standardization instructor yelled out, "Wires 12 o'clock 100 meters!" The pilots made a cyclic limb, barely clearing the wires, followed by a cyclic descent to get below 100 feet above the ground.

When the pilots did the cycle climb and descent, those of



us in the back of the aircraft experienced negative g's. The flight engineer and I were thrown to the ceiling and watched everything not strapped down — such as a cooler full of ice and drinks, a camera and other items — fly out the back of the aircraft. Then we were slammed to the floor. I hit the ramp pretty hard on my way down and hurt my shoulder.

It took a few moments after we leveled off before I was able to respond to the crew because I was crawling up the ramp and was not sure if I was OK. Everyone onboard was scared but not injured. Fortunately, the rest of the flight was quiet and everyone was alert.

When we landed at Balad and shut down the aircraft, another crewmember kissed the ground. I did the same. We all got up the next day

and got back into the aircraft and continued the mission.

This incident proved to me that crew coordination saves lives. Had the pilots announced they were both focused inside, one of them may have stayed outside looking for wires. Also, had they announced it, other crewmembers would have been focused forward and been more alert looking for hazards.

As a pilot now, I talk to my crew about how important each member is and how the most experienced pilots can kill you just as fast as the new ones. Our new aircraft are equipped with equipment that allows a pilot to make calculations and changes to mission planning on the fly. It's great, but you still have to first fly the aircraft. ■

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