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## “Knotty” or Nice?

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Have you ever heard someone threaten to jerk a knot in your head and wondered what that would look like? One Soldier who had too many under her belt and skipped wearing her seat belt found out the hard way.

The short version of the accident report reads, “Soldier was driving drunk, lost control of POV and hit tree. She was not wearing her seat belt; hit her head on the windshield. She was transported to the local hospital and treated for a concussion.”

Sounds simple and to the point, right? Well, maybe not; as they say, the devil is in the details.

Let’s look a little closer. The specialist had been taking advantage of New Years’ Eve to do a little partying. By the wee morning hours, that equated to a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08. Not too bad for New Years’ Eve if the next thing you plan to hit is the pillow. However, when the Soldier started her car a little before 4 a.m., she was on her way to hitting something else.

How many times had she been warned in safety briefings that alcohol and driving don’t mix? You can’t say she didn’t know the potential consequences of drinking and driving. She also clearly knew the Army prohibits Soldiers from placing their lives at such needless risk.

Line 37b of the accident report gets at the real issue: “Soldier made a bad judgment call; drinking, driving, and no seat belt.” Focus on the words “bad judgment call.” When you crash because you intentionally make bad choices, the Army considers that indiscipline.

The short version of the accident report left out some interesting details. Here’s the full version: “Soldier was drinking at a local club (and) then decided to drive her POV while intoxicated. While she was driving drunk, she lost control of her POV and hit a tree. She was not wearing her seat belt, which resulted in her hitting her head on the windshield. She was transported to the local hospital and stayed for four days (while) being treated for a concussion.”

Flying forward and hitting the windshield — that will jerk a knot in your head. Moreover, while she was recovering, her Leaders awarded her an Article 15, suspending her driver’s license for a year and enrolling her in a substance abuse program. Drinking and driving can jerk all kinds of knots in you when you get behind the wheel.

What happens when you're out drinking and contemplating getting behind the wheel? Indiscipline is a personal decision. Will you end up "knotty" or nice?

For more information on driving and indiscipline, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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