

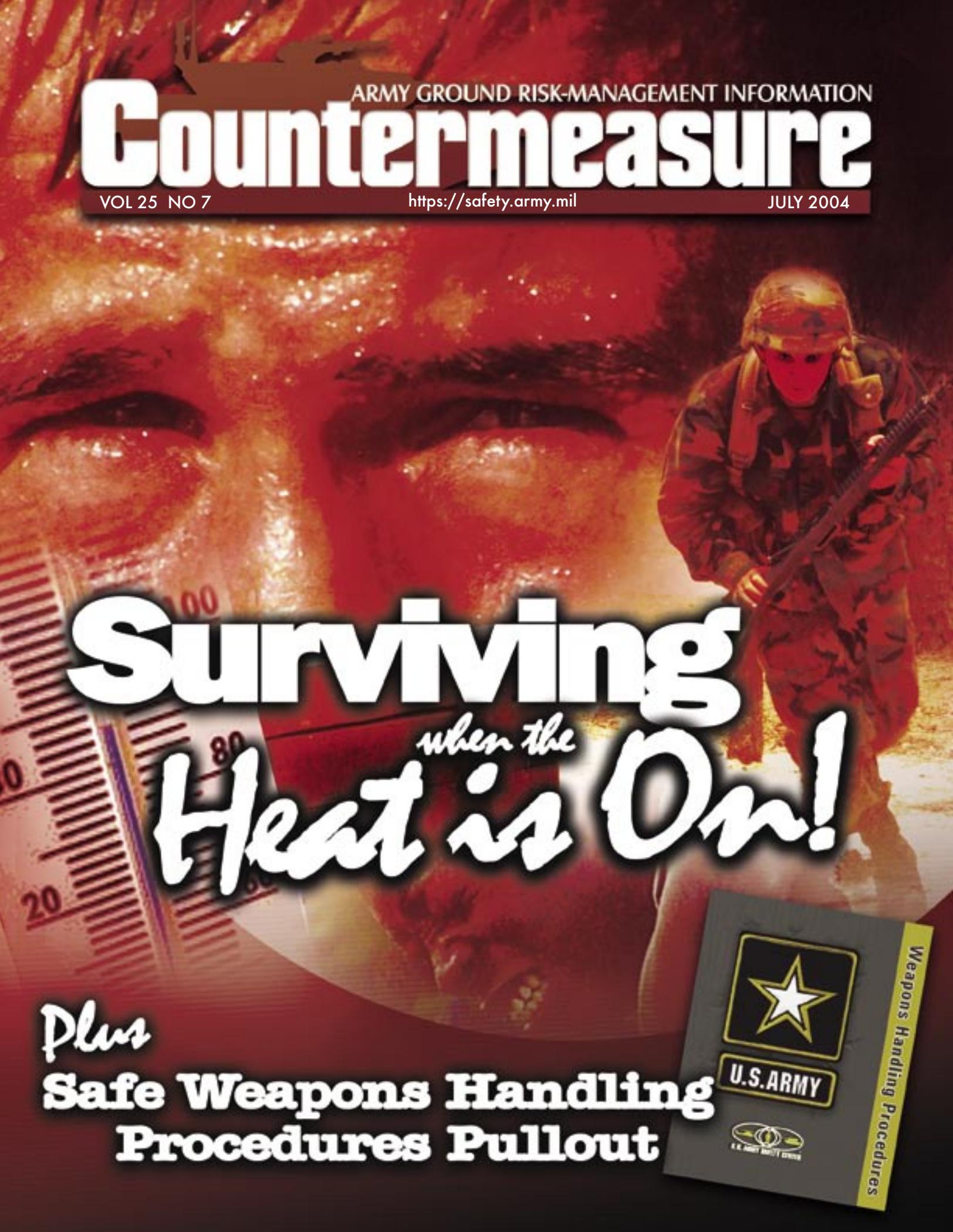
ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

# Countermeasure

VOL 25 NO 7

<https://safety.army.mil>

JULY 2004



# Surviving

*when the*

# Heat is On!

Plus

**Safe Weapons Handling  
Procedures Pullout**



ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

# Countermeasure

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on the web  
<http://safety.army.mil>

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Countermeasure is published monthly by the U.S. Army Safety Center, Bldg 4905, 5th Avenue, Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363. Information is for accident prevention purposes only and is specifically prohibited for use for punitive purposes or matters of liability, litigation, or competition. Address questions about content to DSN 558-2688 (334-255-2688). To submit information for publication, use FAX 334-255-3003 (Mr. Bob Van Elsberg) or e-mail [countermeasure@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:countermeasure@safetycenter.army.mil). Address questions about distribution to DSN 558-2062 (334-255-2062). Visit our Web site at <https://safety.army.mil/>.



# Where Are You at Risk?

In my 30 years of service I have never seen the Army as busy as it is right now. This spring we completed a series of rotations in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) that totaled over 250,000 Soldiers coming in and out of theater—the highest number since World War II. The challenges of the Global War on Terrorism, especially those in Iraq, have gripped the attention of our Army and our Nation.

Whether in theater or at home, our Soldiers and leaders stay focused on accomplishing their part of the mission. We train, we deploy, we fight, we redeploy, and we prepare to repeat the cycle in 12 to 18 months. Our leadership at all levels understands that safety is important to their unit's welfare and combat readiness. But do we truly understand what our leading hazards are each day, or are we blinded by the hazards that may face us in theater? Do we know what is going to get us hurt or killed today, and do we put the appropriate amount of time and resources toward preventing those accidents from happening? Do you?

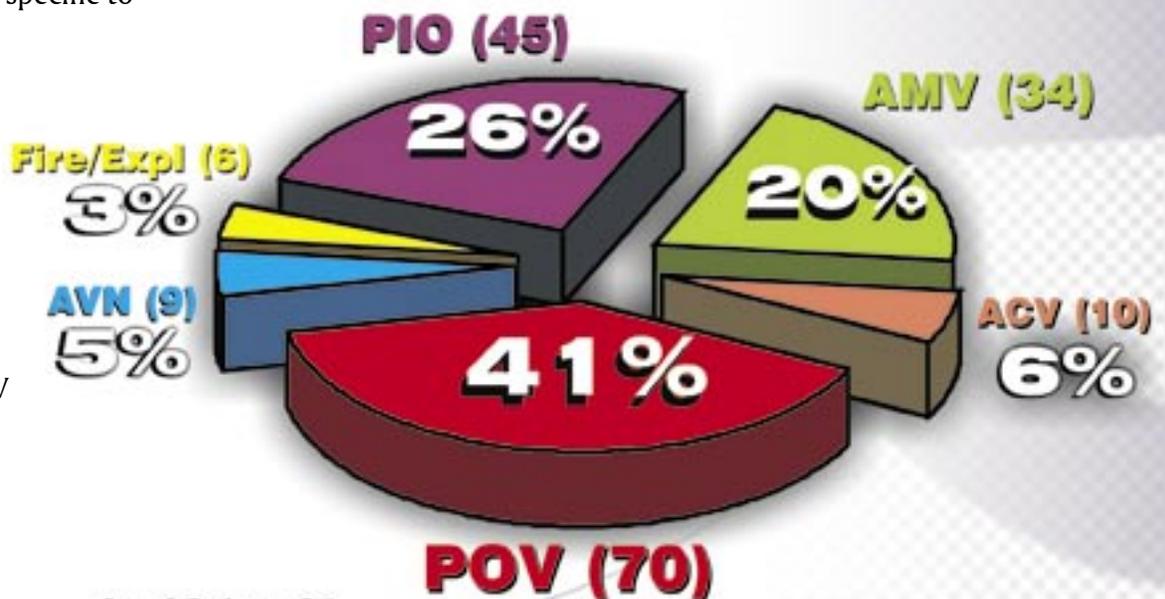
Accidents always have been a significant concern. Since World War I, 55 percent of the Americans killed during combat died because of accidents. Of course, that percentage is much higher during non-combat operations. Therefore, risk management is always an important part of the mission-success puzzle. The first steps of the risk management process are hazard identification and hazard assessment. You ask yourself, "What is going to prevent me from coming home to my family today?" Take a moment to look at the accompanying pie charts and think about where you are right now. As an Army, we have a pretty even distribution of fatal accident causes. Privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents account for the highest number. This is true every year. Personal injury/other (PIO)—which includes accidental discharges, drownings, and heat injuries—are close behind. Army motor vehicle (AMV) accident fatalities, which are often caused by speeding and failure to wear seatbelts, also represent a significant problem.

However, that big Army "hand-wipe" is not sufficient for hazard identification and assessment. Why? Because it isn't specific to you and your mission.

The Army is doing too many things to compare one unit's mission to another. So the question is: Where are you?

If you are in the CENTCOM AOR, the hazards lie in two major categories: AMV and PIO. If you are in a Stryker or HMMWV driving too fast for

Total Army: 1.74



As of 9 June 04

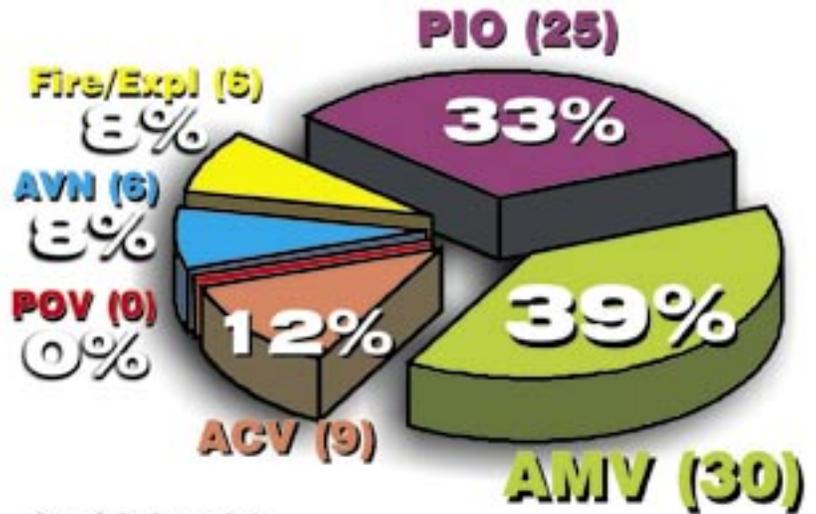
# DASAF'S CORNER

From the Director of Army Safety

the road conditions or riding without a seatbelt, you just became your own worst enemy—more dangerous than any terrorist or improvised explosive device (IED). If you don't effectively enforce proper weapons clearing procedures and muzzle awareness in your squad or platoon, your own teammates will be more of a danger to you than any terrorist. Most leaders in theater know these problems and are focused on them, and the same can be said about leaders of units preparing to deploy. But what about when you are not deployed?

Seventy-two percent of the accidental fatalities this year for Soldiers at home were caused by automobile or motorcycle accidents. This is simply tragic. There is honor in facing death while fighting for your country. There is no honor in dying on a three-day pass because you were too stubborn to wear your seatbelt, pull off to the side of the road when you were tired, or wear your motorcycle helmet. So now that you know where the hazards lie, I ask again: Do we spend the appropriate time and resources to ensure our Soldiers and battle buddies drive defensively on America's roadways? We must train hard to be ready to fight, but all of that training is wasted if Soldiers don't make it to the fight.

This is just the beginning of the hazards identification process. The Safety Center has



As of 9 June 04

## Centcom AOR:76

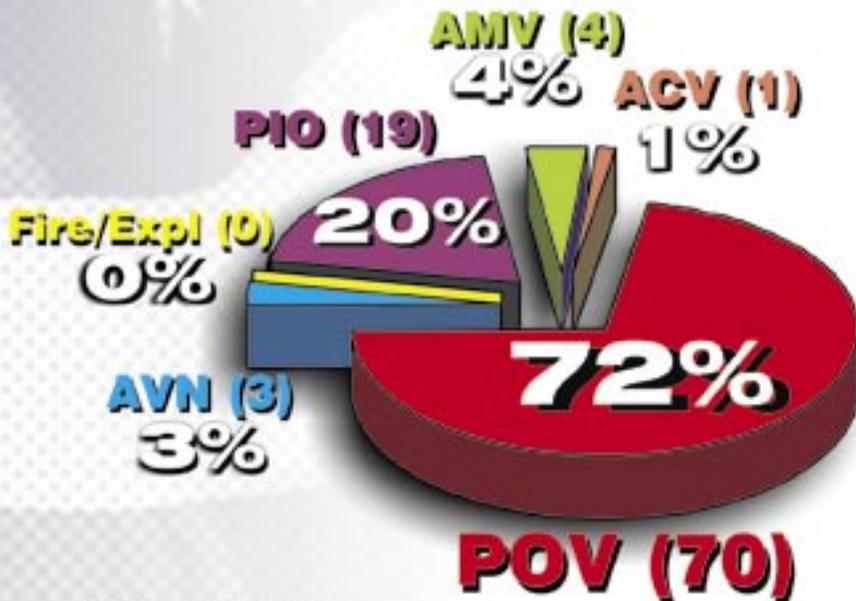
provided two Internet tools to help you identify and assess hazards specific to your mission, whether you are at home or in theater. The Risk Management Information System (<http://rmis1.army.mil>) can tell you the leading accident causes for a specific piece of Army equipment, installation, or type of mission. The ASMIS-1 POV Risk Assessment Tool, available on the Safety Web page (<https://safety.army.mil>), will assess a Soldier's travel plans and simultaneously inform the first-line supervisor what the greatest risks are for any driving trip.

Internet and multimedia tools enhance the risk management process, but they are no substitute for good leadership. We need our leaders to understand where they are in time and place, correctly identify their unit's risks, and take appropriate action to reduce those risks. For those units at home station, the risks of deployment may be "over there," but the risks of America's roadways are present every day and are just as deadly—the statistics prove it. Tough, caring leadership is not always popular, but our Soldiers count on their first-line leaders to make the tough calls and ensure they make it home, every day. ★

**Our Army at War:  
Be Safe and Make It Home!**

*Joe Smith*  
BG Joe Smith

## Everywhere Else:97 Else:97



As of 9 June 04



# SMA Safety Award

COURTESY  
ARMY NEWS SERVICE

**S**ergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston presented, for the first time, two Army safety awards bearing his name.

SSG Edward D. Mills, a master driver, and SFC Charles R. Ryan, the safety noncommissioned officer for his command, received the Sergeant Major of the Army Safety Award for their efforts in creating initiatives that stress the importance of safety to Soldiers.

“The award program was designed to showcase unit leaders who have established a program and made a difference in curbing the number of deaths and accidents that occur Army-wide,” said SMA Preston during a visit to Korea April 17-24. “I want to recognize those leaders who have made extraordinary efforts to make a difference and set their unit apart.”

SSG Mills, who has been assigned to the 2d Infantry Division since September, has led a weekly Master Driver Program, training more than 1,100 Soldiers in a multitude of safe driving practices from operating their vehicles to practicing rollover drills.

“His unit recognized him because of the large number of Soldiers he has impacted in a short period of time,” said SMA Preston. “This program has had a significant impact on his unit and is now being shared throughout the division.”

The master driver is quick to deflect the

focus of the award from him to those who helped facilitate the program.

“I may have received this award on an individual basis, but it was earned as a group,” SSG Mills said.

SFC Ryan serves as the safety NCO in charge for the 19th Theater Support Command. Although he has held the position for only six months, he has instituted numerous safety programs impacting units throughout the command. He has created monthly public service announcements, new safety vests, and an off-duty risk assessment plan used by leaders to counsel their Soldiers.

“For individuals to embrace safety, it has to be a very personal matter,” said the sergeant major of the Army. “Only through our continued aggressive actions as leaders will we reduce the incidence of accidents and negligence. It is up to our leaders to support programs by making the resources available.”

Nominations for the Sergeant Major of the Army Safety Award can only come through the major commands’ sergeant’s major offices.

**Point of contact for information on the SMA Safety Awards program is MSG Richard Puckett, Public Affairs Adviser to the Sergeant Major of the Army, (703) 693-8367, or e-mail [richard.puckett@hqda.army.mil](mailto:richard.puckett@hqda.army.mil)**

# surviving when the heat is

**It's** shaping up to be another hot, steamy morning in Georgia. The ambient air temperature is a cool 78 degrees and the humidity is holding at 80 percent. Although it's only 6 a.m. it's already Heat Category III or IV. Hard to believe? Don't bet your life on it!



# Season!

**JIM WIEHE**  
**Brigade Safety Specialist**  
**Ranger Training Brigade**  
**Fort Benning, Ga**

Obviously, summer is the most dangerous time when it comes to heat injuries and casualties. We've learned the hard way that we can do more to keep Soldiers safe in the heat without lowering the Army's training standards. Sometimes all that's necessary is to change the way we look at things.

For instance, during the summer of 2002 the Ranger Training Brigade was visited by members of the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine (USARIEM), located at Natick Laboratory, Mass. Their goal was to help us reduce heat injuries during stressful physical training, and fitness and skills tests. We had been using what we called "RAP" or "Zero" Week to help acclimate Soldiers to the heat here. However, this was an unofficial week and was removed for budgetary concerns.

Unfortunately, the elimination of Zero Week was followed by a marked increase in the number and severity of heat injuries among the students. During Zero Week in June 2002, eight Soldiers suffered heat exhaustion and one suffered heat stroke. In July, the first month where Zero Week was eliminated, 21 students suffered heat exhaustion and five others suffered heat stroke. During August 2002, 18 students suffered heat exhaustion and four suffered heat stroke. The injury statistics were spiking in the wrong direction. (Note: Most, if not all, of the Soldiers were returned to duty. The injury numbers were obtained from the United States Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine as reported by Fort Benning's Martin Community Hospital.)

What did we find as we looked at these injuries? We began to see that heat injuries are not normally caused by a single event. Instead, heat injuries tend to be cumulative (see the Editor's Note at the end of this article). Our students most often suffered heat injuries after completing several events in succession over a three-day period. These events typically included the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), five-mile run; and the 2 1/2-mile Buddy Run, which included the Malvesti Obstacle Course. The APFT test standard is set for Soldiers 17 to 21 years of age, and the five-mile run is conducted at an eight-minute pace. The 2 1/2-mile Buddy Run is done with students wearing boots, battle dress uniforms, load bearing equipment, and maintaining at least a

10-minute pace. All this was coupled with days that stretched 18 to 20 hours, during which the students only ate two meals.

The Primary Instructor (PI) was following the set rules and standards. He was doing the daily risk assessment to determine the risk level. He also ensured the students followed the hydration policy of drinking one quart of water each hour. In addition, the students were checked by medical personnel for heat injury symptoms before each event. Still, the events were breaking out at a “Moderate” risk level. The only exceptions were the events on the first day and the APFT.

Looking at these problems, the folks visiting from Natick offered some solutions to help reduce our heat injury problems. Based upon those, we chose to make the following training changes.

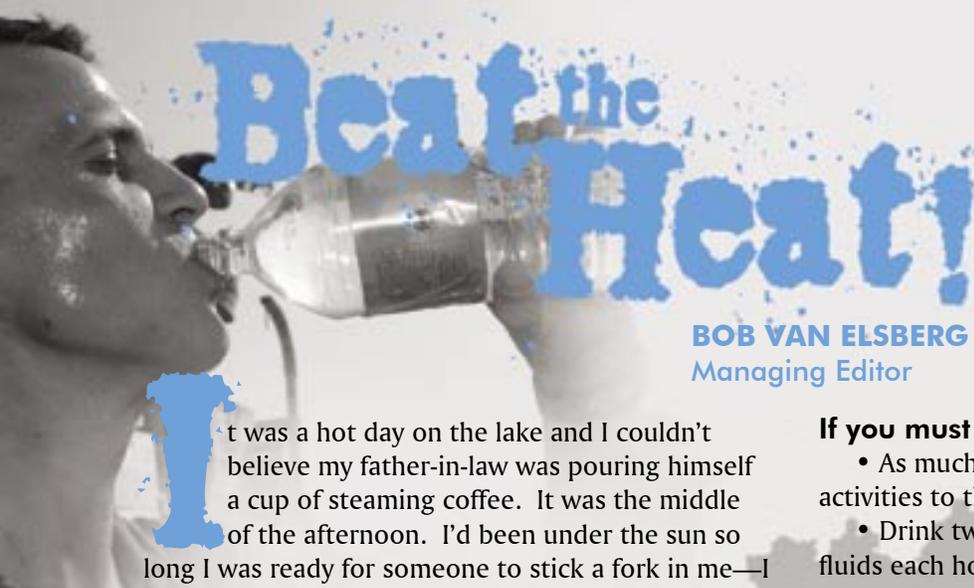
- We opened up our formation during the five-mile run to allow more air to move between the students and better cool them.
- We had the students take soaking, cold showers after the five-mile run and at the end of each day. Cold showers are an effective way to dissipate body heat and help students recover after heavy exercise.
- We provided more shade and made better use of existing shade to limit the students’ exposure to radiant heat.
- We lowered the temperature in the barracks and provided better air circulation in the sleeping huts.
- We modified the students’ nutrition program to ensure they were properly hydrated and also maintained the right electrolyte balance. We gave them more time to eat so they could finish their Meal, Ready-To-Eat. We also provided them a sports drink during the morning and sometimes at night to ensure full hydration, electrolyte replacement, and reduce the potential for hypoglycemia.

We cannot avoid training in the heat—that’s something Rangers must do. We can, however, make that training safer—and that’s something WE must do! 🐾

*Editor’s Note: For more information on the cumulative nature of heat injuries, see the April 2003 issue of Countermeasure, available on the Army Safety Center Web site: <https://safety.army.mil/home.html>, under “Media.”*

Contact the author at (706) 544-6417, DSN 784-6417, or e-mail [wiehej@benning.army.mil](mailto:wiehej@benning.army.mil)

**“We began to see that heat injuries are not normally caused by a single event. Instead, heat injuries tend to be cumulative.”**



# Beat the Heat!

**BOB VAN ELSBERG**  
Managing Editor

**I**t was a hot day on the lake and I couldn't believe my father-in-law was pouring himself a cup of steaming coffee. It was the middle of the afternoon. I'd been under the sun so long I was ready for someone to stick a fork in me—I was definitely well-done!

I watched my father-in-law drink his coffee. I thought he was nuts, but finally asked him the "why" question. His answer surprised me. He said drinking hot coffee cooled him off. I wasn't quite sure I believed him, but I tried it and found that it worked—in a fashion. In just a few minutes I was absolutely soaked in sweat, but at least the breeze coming across the lake felt cooler. However, going from being broiled to being boiled wasn't all that great a solution. I also learned more than I ever wanted to know about what it feels like to be a "human" swamp cooler.

Contrary to my father-in-law's normally sound advice, drinking hot caffeinated beverages is NOT the way to go on a sweltering summer day. Here are some better ideas that may help keep you out of trouble when you're in the heat.

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your level of activity. Also, don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Being thirsty is your body's way of telling you that you're already dehydrated. Warning: If your doctor has limited your fluid intake or has you on water pills, seek his or her advice on how much you should drink when the weather is hot.

- Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine (like coffee or sodas), alcohol, or large amounts of sugar. These beverages can cause you to lose more fluid than you take in. Also, avoid very cold drinks because they can cause stomach cramps.

- Take advantage of the shade. When possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air-conditioning, take a trip to the Post Exchange, library, local mall, theater or other location where you can enjoy the cooled air. Department stores and theaters were two of the earliest places where air-conditioning was offered in America. Even a few hours spent in an air-conditioned location can help you survive when you have to go back into the heat.

- Electric fans can help cool you. However, when the thermometer hits the high 90s, fans will not cool you enough to prevent heat injuries. If you can't get to an air-conditioned location, taking a cool shower or bath will help provide relief from the heat.

## If you must be out in the heat

- As much as possible, limit your outdoor activities to the early morning and evening hours.

- Drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. However, don't drink more than 1 ½ quarts of water an hour or exceed 12 quarts a day or you may suffer bloating and nausea or worse, hyponatremia—a condition that can be fatal.

- Try to rest often in a shady area.

- Protect yourself by wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a good pair of sunglasses. "Good sunglasses" aren't just the ones that look "cool"—they need to block the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation. According to the American Optometric Association,

## "Take advantage of the shade."

good sunglasses should block 99 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation. Also, protect your skin by wearing sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.

- Blondes—especially those who are blue-eyed, redheads, and others with fair skin are especially vulnerable to sunburns.

- Some medications can make you more vulnerable to sunburn and other heat-related illnesses. Among those are antibiotics; and seizure, heart, and high blood pressure medications. If you're taking any kind of medication, find out if it puts you at greater risk when working in the sun and heat. This includes over-the-counter cold remedies and antihistamines. ☞

*Editor's Note: Much of the information for this article was provided courtesy of the 104th Area Support Group, Hanau, Germany.*

Contact the author at (334) 255-2688, DSN 558-2688, or e-mail [robert.vanelberg@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:robert.vanelberg@safetycenter.army.mil)

## Are Captured Weapons Safe to Shoot?

I am an ammunition quality assurance specialist at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Middletown, Iowa. I am also an Army veteran and a collector of "bad guy" weapons. In the next-to-last paragraph of your story "Are Captured Weapons Safe to Shoot?" in the April 2004 issue of **Countermeasure**, you mention that "... it might be possible to fire a 9x19 mm cartridge in a Makarov ...." The Makarov cartridge has an 18 mm-long case and would not chamber (allow the slide to close) on a 9x19 Parabellum round. A more likely case would be someone firing a 9 mm short (.380 ACP) round, which has a 17 mm-long case. In either scenario, headspace would be a problem.

*Bill Trusty  
Iowa Ammunition Plant*

Mr. Trusty brings up a good point. The Russian-designed 9 mm Makarov has an 18 mm-long case versus the 19 mm-long case of the 9 mm Parabellum used in the Beretta M9 handgun. Technically, the 9 mm Parabellum should be too long to go into the chamber of a Makarov pistol. However, the Makarov cartridge fires a bullet that is actually 9.2 mm (.365 versus .355 in the 9 mm Parabellum). As a result, the Makarov's chamber and bore diameter are slightly larger than that of the Beretta M9. Also, the "Pistolet Makarova," as it is designated in Russian parlance, was produced in East Germany, Bulgaria, and China in addition to those built in the former Soviet Union. Tolerances—in particular those relating to the bore diameter—can vary. Add to that the potential for poor bore and chamber maintenance and excessive wear, and who knows for certain what might be possible? The Web site **Makarov.com** has a FAQ section that suggests the 9 mm Parabellum can be chambered in the Makarov. Because I reload my own ammunition—to include both the 9 mm Makarov and 9 mm Parabellum—I am aware of the much-

higher chamber pressures of the latter. I've owned four Makarovs but never tried to chamber or fire a 9 mm Parabellum in any of them. Being "mathematically challenged," I still need all 10 fingers.

*The Editor*

## Hurry Up and Get Hurt!

**Editor's Note: The following letter refers to an article in our March 2004 issue describing a motor pool accident caused when Soldiers used a forklift to support a HEMTT trailer while doing a tire change. The HEMTT driver got caught between the forklift and the trailer and was injured. We asked readers to tell us what they thought were the contributing factors to this accident.**

I have been in the same situation more than once in the past. This story leads me to believe the leaders' insistence on timeliness was not balanced with the caution to follow proven safety procedures. At safety briefings, or at least at leadership meetings the night before (the convoy movement), all leaders should have been reminded to make sure risky procedures were not used. Also, with the entire battalion loading and preparing to convoy, it would have been wise to have the sergeant major in the area watching the troops for any unsafe activity.

Lastly and most importantly, the author made no mention of the Soldiers being briefed on safety and the importance of not taking shortcuts. Soldiers need to be reminded that they're responsible for their own safety and no amount of hurry justifies doing things unsafely.

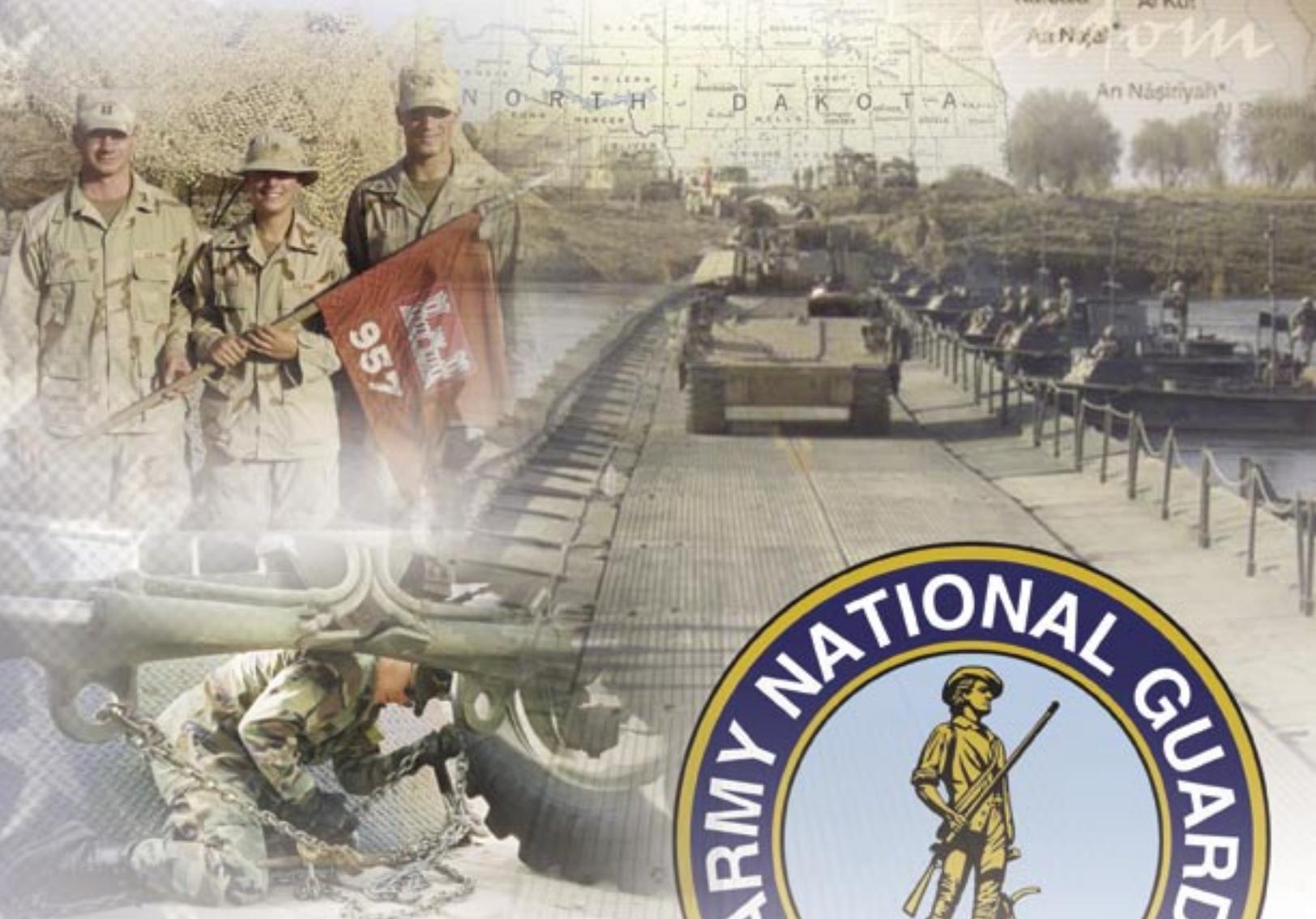
*SFC George Miller  
NDARNG*



# SAFETY SENDS

From the Director of Army Safety

*Operation Iraqi Freedom*



## Opening Kudos

**I**want to give a big congratulation to the North Dakota Army National Guard and their safety programs. The 42nd Engineer Battalion recently returned from a year-long accident-free tour supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 957th Multi-role Bridge Company, despite losing three Soldiers in action, drove 600,000 accident-free miles during their year in Iraq. The 141st Engineer Battalion, currently in Iraq, has suffered no accidents to date. Wow! Well done!

We continue to have problems with accidental weapons discharges, and this Safety Sends will focus on that issue. In addition, we are still having a problem with rollover accidents. There also are some clear indications we need to look at speed in large truck fleet operations. The combination of near-empty vehicle weights, environmental conditions, and speed is pushing our truck drivers to the limit of their capabilities.

Between April 30 and May 6, 2004, the Army reported eight Class A ground accidents that resulted in nine fatalities. Below is a brief summary of those accidents.

- **AMV:** There were three rollovers, resulting in six fatalities. Seatbelt use is not known at this time for these accidents. However, in one incident, the driver of a 5-ton truck did not have an assistant driver.

- **Accidental Discharges:** There were two fatalities from accidental weapons discharges. A Soldier had the barrel of his M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) pointing toward his body while mounting the weapon on a vehicle. Another Soldier shot himself while cleaning his M9 pistol.

- **Recreation:** A Soldier fell from a 300-foot cliff while mountain climbing without safety equipment, resulting in a fatality.

- **Motorcycle:** Two Soldiers suffered permanent total disabilities in separate motorcycle accidents.

### **A closer look at accidental discharges**

During FY03-04 in Operation Iraqi Freedom,

weapons handling errors produced more than 96 reported accidental discharges, resulting in 19 fatalities. In theater, the top five branches with reported accidental weapons discharges were: Military Police (14), Infantry (12), Military Intelligence (7), Field Artillery (7), and Armor (7). Others who had accidental discharges were: Engineers (6), Quartermaster (3), Transportation (3), Medical Corps (3), Air Defense (1), Signal (1), and Special Operations Forces (1). Remember, accidental discharges were only recorded in our database if someone was injured and lost at least one workday, suffered some form of disabling injury or was killed, or if there was at least Class C-level damage to equipment. There were hundreds of near misses that were not reported. The Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) is taking this issue head-on. Here is what we have learned so far:

- Basic Soldier skill—accidental discharges are not limited to junior Soldiers.

- Leaders, normally seen as solutions to human-error accidents, are actually part of the problem.

- Enlisted grades E-5 and above produced 20 incidents. Six others involved officers and warrant officers.

This is clearly an accident area where individual Soldier discipline, individual accountability, and supervision are essential if we are going to put a stop to these deaths.

### **Vignettes—accidental discharges**

- A Soldier fatally shot another Soldier at a checkpoint. The Soldier had his M16A2 rifle pointed at the other Soldier's head and inadvertently discharged his weapon. *Factors—Muzzle Awareness, Supervision*

- An NCO accidentally discharged an M2 machine gun during positioning of the guard, killing a civilian.

# MAKE IT HOME

*Factors—Weapons Handling, Muzzle Awareness, Supervision*

- An NCO was cleaning his M9 9 mm pistol when it accidentally discharged, striking him in the head and killing him. *Factors—Weapons Handling, Muzzle Awareness*

- A Soldier got in front of an M249 SAW while mounting it on a HMMWV. The SAW was loaded and discharged, shooting the Soldier in the abdomen. He later died of the wounds. *Factors—Weapons Handling, Muzzle Awareness, Supervision*

Weapons safety is an important message that must be pushed all the way to the bottom of our formations. Our Soldiers must understand the impact and accountability of an accidental weapons discharge. For example, a Soldier allowed children to play with his unloaded M16. When he retrieved it and reloaded, it discharged and the ricochet killed a child. Not only did the child die, but the Soldier was tried by general courts-martial.

## **Safe Weapons Handling Procedures:**

Unloading a weapon is simply one step in the process of clearing it.

While this seems common sense, our manuals have been ambiguous and have contributed to confusion as to where and when to conduct these procedures. The Army is finalizing a set of straightforward, commonsense standards that account for weapons differences to eliminate that ambiguity. Those standards will be distributed as pocket-size leader guides and Soldier cards issued with each weapon. The final draft can be reviewed at <https://safety.army.mil> in the “Quick View” box and can be used at leaders’ discretion. In addition, the SMA has written several articles in magazines such as *Countermeasure*, *Flightfax*,

**“During FY03-04 in Operation Iraqi Freedom, weapons handling errors produced more than 96 reported accidental discharges, resulting in 19 fatalities.”**

and *The NCO Journal* to emphasize the importance of enforcing clearing procedures. The *Flightfax* and *Countermeasure* articles can be found on our Web site. For your convenience, we have provided a poster version of the pocket-size guide in this issue of *Countermeasure*.

## **Final thoughts**

Safety Sends is part of the Army Safety Campaign. I hope it is helpful to our leaders. The goal is to share current information about Army trends so we can quickly focus our efforts and prevent accidents. Clearly,



there is no intent to poke anyone in the eye. Some information is taken directly from initial field reports, so make sure the right people are involved in the process. I really appreciate the feedback from the field ... keep it coming!

Thanks again to each of you for all you are doing! ★

**BG Joe Smith**  
**Director of Army Safety**

# The Great LT Adve

**T**here I was, a high-speed, all-knowing, super-aviator lieutenant working as a battle captain in a general support aviation battalion during my second National Training Center rotation. It was a nice, sunny morning when the assistant S1—another high-speed, all-knowing, super-aviator lieutenant—told me we were going from our assembly area (AA) back to Bicycle Lake Army Airfield base operations to complete the unit status report.

Being a couple of squared (clueless) lieutenants, we wandered around the AA, which was near the East Gate, until we found a HMMWV that wasn't being used. We "borrowed" (stole) it and checked the fluid levels—this was our version of preventive maintenance checks and services. As far as a detailed plan of our route, the S1 remarked, "I was an observer controller (O/C) here, so I know how to get there." He then checked our computers, water, load bearing equipment, and weapons and said, "All right, let's go!"

We arrived at Bicycle Lake around 8:30 a.m. At 3:30 p.m. I suggested we should start heading back to the AA before it got dark. The S1 said he had a few more items to tie up and then we would leave. At 5 p.m. I put my foot down and said, "We're leaving!" The S1 commented, "Don't worry, I was an O/C here and know this place like the back of my hand." We finally departed a half hour later.

As we were driving out of the cantonment area I had a flash of the obvious—it was already dark! About that time the S1 turned off the HMMWV's white lights, and we were suddenly surrounded by pitch-black darkness. I told the S1, "Turn the #&@! lights back on!" He responded by saying we weren't allowed to drive with our white lights on. I had him stop the vehicle while I retrieved my handy red lens flashlight, and then proceeded to hang out the window and shine it on the ground about 10 feet in front of the HMMWV. As we continued driving I thought, "This is going to work—it'll just take a little longer to get back."

A few minutes later I started noticing we were passing a lot of shrubs, so I had the S1 stop the vehicle again. I discovered we had driven off the road, so I dismounted and tried to find it again, but it was too dark. By lying down on the ground and using the lights from Las Vegas, I was able to silhouette a large hill we called "the Whale" against the sky. We then decided to head for it and got there five hours

# Adventure

**Anonymous**

later. From the hill we could see convoys driving down the main supply route, so we linked up with one and rolled back into the AA around 4:30 a.m. Needless to say, we received a severe “butt chewing” from the battalion commander!

A few days later when I had some “down time” (a reflective moment in the porta-john), I pondered our “Great LT Adventure” and came upon some startling revelations. The first was that as a pilot in command of a multi-million dollar aircraft, I would have never committed the

**2**  
Assess  
Hazards

**3**  
Develop  
Controls & Make  
Decisions

sins I did in that HMMWV. You know—things such as no route planning, maps, water, food, and night vision goggles (NVGs). Worst of all, we did absolutely NO risk assessment.

The Great LT Adventure did teach me some lessons that I’ve applied ever since. First, always make a plan—the more detailed the better. Second, always assume you’ll have to spend the night someplace other than your AA, so make sure you have enough ammunition, fuel for your vehicle, food for yourself, and good communications. Third, if you leave the AA, make sure you take your NVGs. Finally, do all five steps of risk management for every mission, no matter how simple it seems. You don’t want to have a Great LT Adventure yourself! 

**Having trouble remembering the five steps of Risk Management? Well, here they are just in case you’re a bit “rusty”:**

- 1. Identify hazards**
- 2. Assess hazards**
- 3. Develop controls and make decisions**
- 4. Implement controls**
- 5. Supervise and evaluate**

**Here’s a little tongue-in-cheek memory tool:**

- I**—[Identify hazards]
- Always**—[Assess hazards]
- Did**—[Develop controls and make decisions]
- Insane**—[Implement controls]
- Stuff**—[Supervise and evaluate]

**W**e heard it during every holiday weekend safety briefing—"If you're going to drive more than 200 miles away for the weekend, allow yourself plenty of time and get plenty of rest. Don't try to make a 12-hour drive in eight hours."

We all knew what "could" go wrong, but nothing was going to happen to me. I was 21 years old and immortal. I was "Airborne!" I was invincible.

It was 1988 and I'd been stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., for just over a year. It was a 12-hour drive to my hometown in the Florida panhandle. I'd made that drive every long weekend since arriving at Fort Bragg. The Fourth of July weekend would be no different, except this time I wouldn't be making the trip back alone.

For several months I'd been trying to convince my mother to move to North Carolina. She, and my sister who was 12—the youngest of six siblings, could live with me until mom could get settled in. She'd finally agreed.

I'd planned the trip pretty well. I was going to drive down on Friday (it was a four-day weekend), celebrate the holiday with my family on Saturday,

# I'll NEVER DRIVE that TIRED A

**CW3 KIMBERLY R. NOE**  
Aircraft Armament Officer

and then we'd drive back to North Carolina on Sunday. That would give us Monday to recover, and I also could familiarize my mother with the area. That was the plan—but plans change.

"Saturday night" didn't end until 2 a.m. Sunday, so the "plenty of rest" plan was out. We got up at 6 a.m. to get ready for our planned departure time of 9 a.m. But the family good-byes took longer than anticipated—seven hours longer, to be exact. So we didn't get on the road until 4 p.m. But I thought nothing of it. I'd made the trip many times after getting off work at 5 p.m. and nothing

had happened. This time would be no different.

We'd been on the road for about eight hours. We'd stopped only twice and were now outside of Savannah, Ga. My sister was asleep in the backseat and my mother was drifting in and out of sleep in the front passenger seat. I was starting to feel tired, so I decided to make a rest stop at the South Carolina Welcome Center, located one mile across the state line. The welcome center was just five miles—10 minutes—from Savannah. All I had to do was make it through town and across the Savannah River Bridge. I knew I could do that.

I remember leaving Savannah and thinking, "Just five more miles and I'll stop and stretch." However, the next thing I remember was seeing the exit sign for the welcome center. I couldn't remember driving the five miles I had driven from Savannah or even crossing the Savannah River Bridge—which is about a quarter-mile long.

When I saw the exit sign, I instinctively hit the brakes and quickly turned onto the exit ramp. The sudden movement woke my mom. Startled, she asked if I was OK. I said "yes," and that I'd stopped to use the restroom and stretch for a few minutes. Luckily it was dark and she couldn't tell that my hands were shaking and my heart was about to pound out of my chest.

I walked around the parking lot for 15 minutes or so, trying to calm down and thinking about what I had just done. It was bad enough that I'd put myself in danger—but on that night I

endangered the lives of my mother and sister.

What if something had happened and they'd been injured, or worse? If I'd survived,

I couldn't have lived with myself knowing that my decision to drive tired had caused them harm.

I still had four more hours of driving, so I decided to stay at the welcome center until daybreak. Some would say that was dangerous, but it was not nearly as dangerous as me getting back on the road again.

Even though nothing happened, that night changed me. I started looking at life differently. I realized I wasn't invincible or immortal, and from then on I decided not to act like I was.

My grandmother used to say, "God takes care of fools and little children." That night He was looking over both. It's not hard to guess which one I was.

I don't know how I avoided having an accident that night. Some might call it luck, others, the grace of God. Either way, I made a promise that I would never drive tired again. To this day I've kept that promise and I'm thankful I'm still here to tell you about it. —

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About the author:

CW3 Noe enlisted in the Army in 1986 as an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter repairer. After nine years of enlisted service, during which she served as a squad leader, technical inspector, and platoon sergeant, she applied for warrant officer selection as an aviation maintenance technician. A warrant officer since 1995, she has served as an armament platoon leader and a production control officer at the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance level. She also has served as an armament officer and shops platoon leader in an AH-64A battalion. She has three years' experience as a company aviation safety officer and collateral duty safety officer.

# POV UPDATE

FY 04

through  
May 2004

## Class A-C accidents/soldiers killed

□ Cars	96/54
■ Vans	0/0
■ Trucks	27/7
■ Motorcycles	48/8
■ Other*	6/1

\*Includes tractor-trailers,  
unknown POVs, and bicycles

Total POV  
Fatalities

70

FY03

63

3-Yr  
Avg

62

# A Little Hell on Wheels

**MSG (RET) JONATHAN W. PIERCE**  
Senior Logistics Management Writer  
*PS Magazine*



**I** was 21 before I drove a manual transmission vehicle. My fiancée had a Volkswagen Beetle with a stick shift. She taught me how to drive it in a high school parking lot a few weeks before I graduated from advanced individual training.

At our first post, Fort Hood, Texas, I was introduced to the M151 Jeep. Within a few weeks of being assigned to the 2d Armored Division's Public Affairs Office, I'd been to the motor pool and introduced to the vehicle's technical manuals and preventive maintenance checks and services. I'd been shown how to drive on level ground and how to shift into four-wheel drive. I'd even graduated to driving up and down the "steep" inclines of our outdoor wash racks.

Not long afterwards, the "Hell on Wheels" division held a field training exercise (FTX) against the 1st Cavalry Division. The assistant public affairs officer, a brand new "butterbar," decided we needed to gather photos and articles for the local news media. I was his designated driver.

Anyone familiar with central Texas—and Fort Hood in particular—can visualize the steep-sided hills that look like eroded buttes.

The unit my lieutenant wanted to visit was at the top of one such hill. I became aware of that fact when we drove to the hill and the lieutenant pointed at a tank trail that seemed to go straight up.

I declined the idea of driving up that trail because I knew I wasn't skilled enough to handle it. The lieutenant then flexed his authority and demanded that I overcome my fear. He was, I'm sure, trying to give me experience and self-confidence. I was just an inexperienced private faced with the dilemma of disobeying an order or ignoring common sense and doing something for which I was not prepared.

So up we went.

The problem was the top of the hill was now in "enemy" hands. An armored personnel carrier rolled up in front of me, and a Vulcan track pulled up behind. We weren't going anywhere. Only when the unit vacated the hill were we allowed to move. But now the problem was how to safely descend and negotiate the steep, rutted tank trail without getting run over by the Vulcan track rapidly catching up to us.

We made it somehow. Maybe it was dumb luck or heaven's will, but I'm still here. However, I can still see that trail, feel the bumps, and almost taste the dust and the bile that churned in my stomach.

## **What was the underlying problem here?—Leadership.**

- Why didn't my public affairs officer and company commander ensure I received proper driver's training before sending me out?
- Why was my first drive into a training area conducted during an FTX without a qualified instructor?
- Why wouldn't a junior officer accept his driver's warning that his training hadn't prepared him for the situation?
- Why did the Vulcan track commander allow his track to start its descent before my jeep was even a quarter of the way down the hill?

## **Is there a difference between assumptions and risk assessment?**

- The lieutenant assumed my reluctance was based upon fear—which it was, given my lack of training.
  - The lieutenant assumed his leadership would be weakened if he backed down on his command. (What if we'd had an accident? What would his leadership style have looked like then?)
    - The Vulcan track commander and his driver assumed that if I could get up the hill, I could get down it safely.
    - The Vulcan track commander assumed his track wouldn't run away from his driver and crush my jeep.
- Leadership and assumptions, when misused, can create needless hazards—which is just what the Army Safety Campaign is trying to avoid. Risk assessment is needed at every level, every day, by everyone, and all the time. 🚗

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**Class A**

- Soldier was killed when the LMTV he was riding in ran off the roadway and overturned. The LMTV's driver apparently fell asleep at the wheel, causing the accident.

- Two local national civilians died when their vehicle was rear-ended by an M915A1 HEMTT. The HEMTT's driver switched lanes to avoid hitting another convoy vehicle just before the accident.

- Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the HMMWV he was riding in overturned. The HMMWV's driver swerved for unknown reasons and overcorrected the vehicle, causing it to roll. Two other Soldiers were injured.

- Soldier was killed when the M1074 PLS truck he was driving rear-ended a HEMTT to its front. The two vehicles were traveling in the same convoy, and the HEMTT had stopped to let a civilian vehicle pass just before the collision.

- Soldier drowned after falling from his HMMWV. The HMMWV was rear-ended by a civilian truck, pushing it partially off a bridge. The deceased Soldier, who was driving the HMMWV, attempted to climb out of the vehicle but fell into the river below.

- Soldier died after his HMMWV overturned and pinned him during a convoy operation in limited visibility conditions. The Soldier reportedly swerved to avoid the lead vehicle just before the accident.



**Class A**

- Soldier suffered a permanent total disability when he missed his target during an airborne proficiency jump and was dragged 50 feet. No other details were provided.

- Soldier died when a round from his 9 mm weapon accidentally discharged and struck him in the head. The Soldier was cleaning the weapon when it fired.

- Soldier was killed after he fell 300 feet from a ledge while mountain climbing. The Soldier, who was climbing with another Soldier, reportedly was not using safety equipment.

- Soldier collapsed during an APFT and was pronounced dead at a local hospital. No other details were provided.

- Soldier reportedly was electrocuted and died while performing maintenance on a generator. The Soldier was found with two electrical wires stretched across his body.



**Class A**

- Soldier was killed when his motorcycle collided head-on with a pickup truck. The Soldier was trying to pass another vehicle on a curve in a no-passing zone.

- Two Soldiers died when their vehicle ran off the roadway and struck a tree. The vehicle was consumed in flames shortly after the crash, and both Soldiers were burned beyond recognition.

- Soldier suffered fatal injuries when his vehicle struck

another vehicle head-on. No other details were provided.

- Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in overturned. One of the vehicle's tires reportedly blew, causing the driver to lose control and roll the vehicle.

- Soldier suffered a permanent total disability when he was thrown from his motorcycle and struck a concrete barrier. The motorcycle's rear tire began to wobble just before the accident, causing the Soldier to lose control of the bike.

- Soldier died after being broadsided by a sport utility vehicle. No other details were provided.

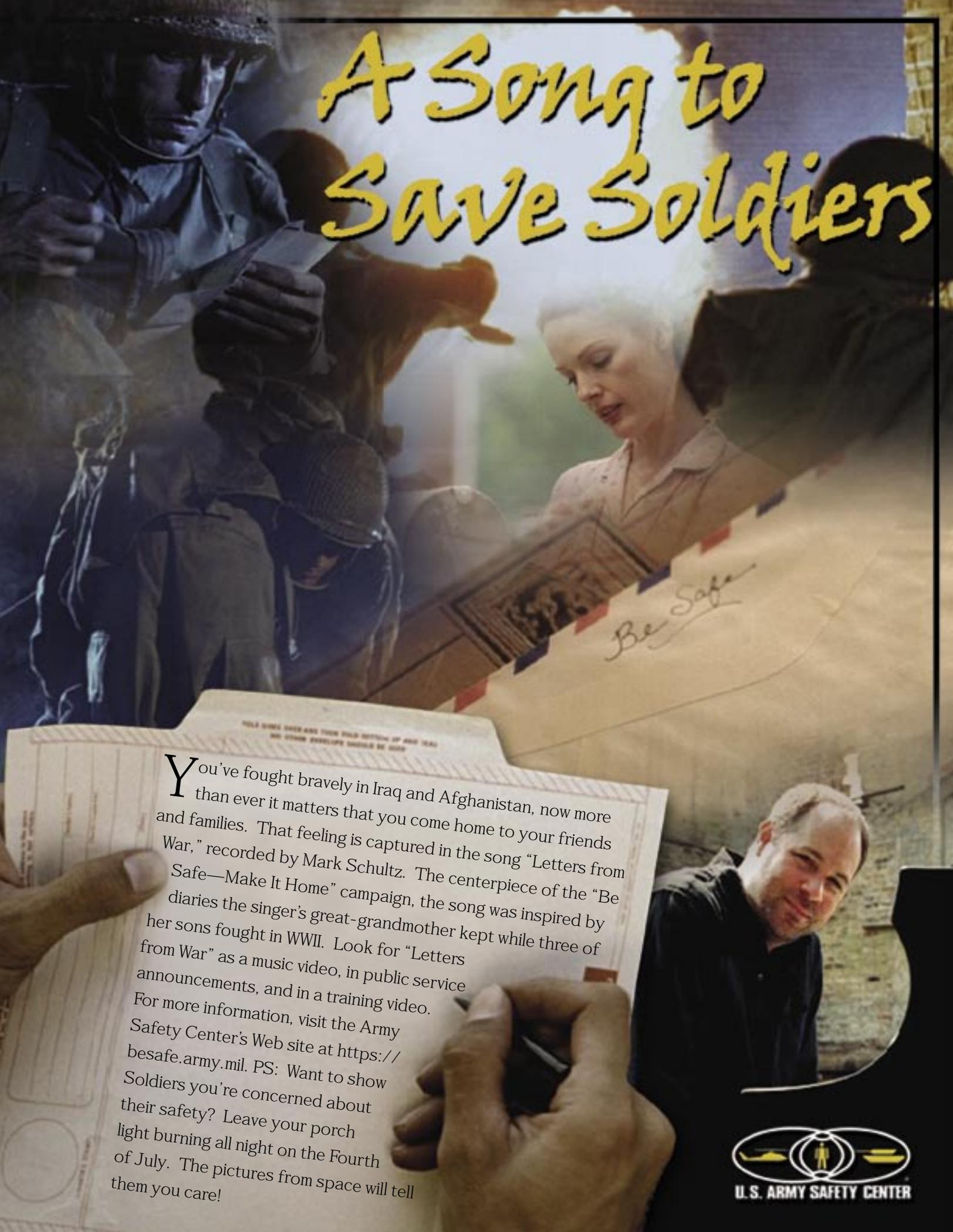
- Soldier suffered a permanent total disability when his POV struck another vehicle and rolled several times. The Soldier was ejected from the vehicle and suffered a severe head injury.

- Soldier suffered a permanent total disability when his vehicle struck another vehicle head-on. The other vehicle, driven by a civilian, was traveling in the wrong lane at the time of the accident. The Soldier was wearing his seatbelt.

- Soldier was killed when his motorcycle overturned. The Soldier rolled the bike and was thrown from it after he swerved to avoid a deer in the road.

- Soldier died after his vehicle ran off the roadway and struck a tree. Three other Soldiers riding in the vehicle were injured.

# A Song to Save Soldiers



**Y**ou've fought bravely in Iraq and Afghanistan, now more than ever it matters that you come home to your friends and families. That feeling is captured in the song "Letters from War," recorded by Mark Schultz. The centerpiece of the "Be Safe—Make It Home" campaign, the song was inspired by diaries the singer's great-grandmother kept while three of her sons fought in WWII. Look for "Letters from War" as a music video, in public service announcements, and in a training video. For more information, visit the Army Safety Center's Web site at <https://besafe.army.mil>. PS: Want to show Soldiers you're concerned about their safety? Leave your porch light burning all night on the Fourth of July. The pictures from space will tell them you care!

