



ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Countermeasure

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POV SPECIAL ISSUE

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The Holiday Season and Reflection

We are each privileged to serve in the finest Army our country has ever known. For more than 220 years, this great Army has existed to fight and win our Nation's wars. Today we are more than a year into this war on terrorism, and I can tell you—without any hesitation—that all of our soldiers and units have performed magnificently both on the battlefield and in training as we prepare for combat.

As we enter this holiday season, reflecting on the events of the past year gives us an even greater appreciation for the tremendous job you do every day. We have prosecuted this war in some of the most dangerous terrain on the face of the earth, in possibly the most unforgiving aviation environment the Army has ever encountered. Because of your efforts and skills, our Army has been successful where others before us have failed. We have succeeded and will continue to succeed because great soldiers like each of you were able to effectively manage risks involved in those operations. Your skills in identifying and assessing hazards and being able to define and implement controls to reduce risks helped us to be successful with minimal losses.

I personally thank you for your willingness to serve and for the great job you are doing. And, I would be terribly remiss if I failed to also thank the families and friends who support you and allow the Army to use your skills and talents as we continue to prosecute this war on those who wish us harm.

Many of you will enjoy the comforts of home and the joys of being with family this holiday season. If you are traveling, I urge you to be extra cautious, as POV accidents are still the number one killer of our soldiers. Be extra vigilant in identifying, assessing, and controlling hazards. A moment's lapse in awareness can easily result in tragedy.

For those who are deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or to any of the many other points around the world with an American Army presence, know that our thoughts and prayers are with you.

To all of you who each day put your life on the line to defend this great country, have a safe and happy holiday season and know that we, as a Nation, are truly grateful for your service. 🇺🇸

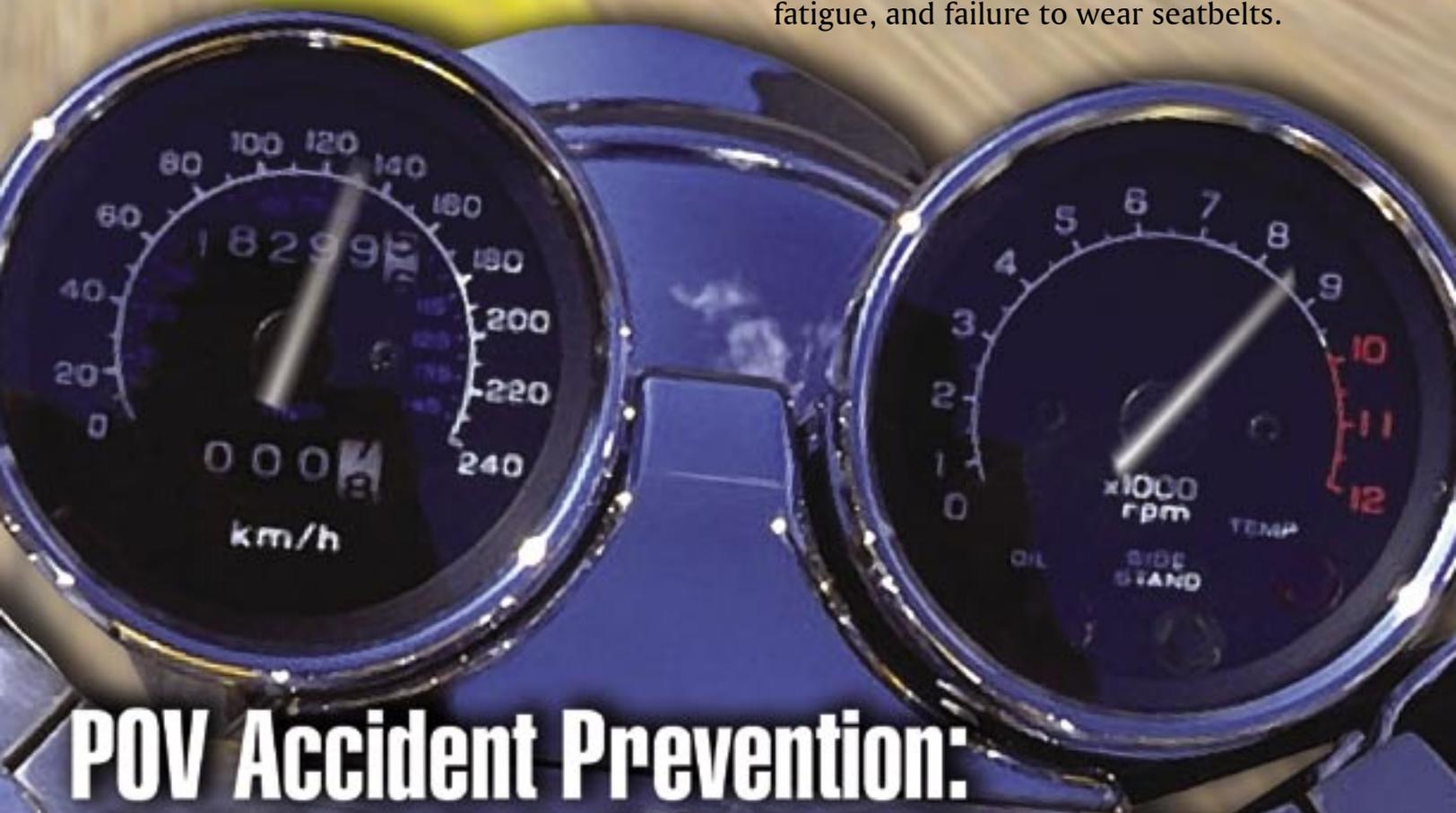
Train Hard, Be Safe!
BG James E. Simmons

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James E. Simmons".

The majority of Army fatalities still result from POV accidents. Our Army's senior leadership repeatedly has challenged all of us to redouble our efforts and get our arms around this needless drain on readiness. Across the Army, we've made valiant attempts with good success in some units. But, overall,

we've all found that this has proven to be a difficult mission to accomplish.

Of the 206 total Army fatalities in FY02, 113 were the result of POV accidents. This figure represents an unacceptable 14-percent increase above the 99 POV fatalities recorded in FY01. Causal factors continue to include aggressive driving, speed, fatigue, and failure to wear seatbelts.



POV Accident Prevention: **CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR**

The biggest increase in fatalities is attributed to motorcycle accidents—a 54-percent increase over last year. Motorcycle-specific accident causes include aggressive driving, speed, alcohol, and failure to wear a helmet. A major contributing factor is that many of these soldiers did not attend the Motorcycle Safety Course. As leaders, it is incumbent upon us to mandate that any soldier riding a motorcycle complete this course BEFORE they operate a motorcycle.

Although the Army's traffic fatality rate is about 20 percent less than the nation's, past POV accident analysis shows that the Army's accident experience closely mirrors the nation's when it comes to age, gender, and types of accidents. For example, Army male drivers under the age of 25 are the most likely age group to become involved in fatal accidents because they often tend to underestimate the hazards and overestimate their personal abilities. It's that "I'm young, I'm invincible, I'll live forever" mentality. Sadly, young soldiers often are not as invincible as they think they are.

The big difference between the Army and the general public, of course, is that we, as leaders, can exert more control over soldier behavior. We owe it to our soldiers to work diligently to change their attitudes and behavior regarding POV safety, and the individual in the best position to effect that change is the squad leader.

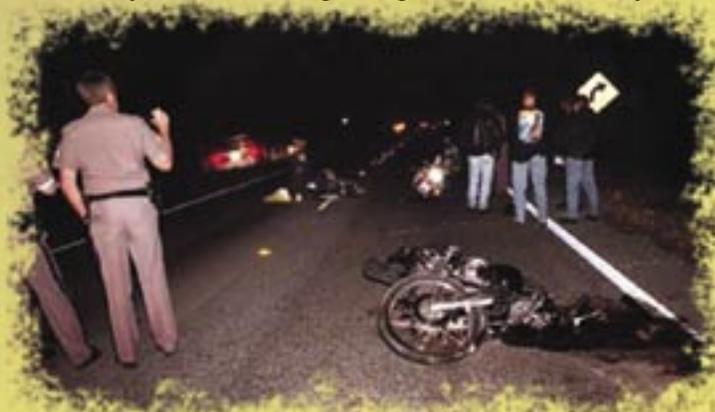
The squad leader knows which soldiers are out late at night, which soldiers are always rushing, and what kind of cars they drive. The squad leader also knows that those soldiers are taking risks. He or she has to get in the head of that soldier and intervene.

Attitude and behavior will not be changed with unit safety briefings alone. Policies may state that safety briefings are mandatory, but that does not change behavior. At safety briefings, soldiers may not be paying attention. Sometimes they are thinking about other things. Changing attitudes and behavior will happen only with education, training, and intervention.

There are a lot of intervention measures that leaders can use in units. One example: when bringing soldiers in from the field, clean up the equipment and hold soldiers overnight before releasing them. Soldiers are tired from stress and little sleep while in the field. As a commander, you can hold the unit for a rest and recovery

period so that your soldiers won't be fatigued when hitting the highways. It may not make the soldiers happy, but it could prevent an accident.

It isn't just fatigue from a long week in the field that is a major cause of POV accidents. Another is soldiers rushing to get back to the PT formation on Monday morning. They often depart from their weekend destination late on Sunday night or in the early morning hours on Monday. Focused on getting back in time, they



sometimes push it a little too hard and end up killing themselves at 0200 or 0300. The squad leader should know which of his or her soldiers will do this and has a moral responsibility to help change these soldiers' behavior.

"Every Drive Counts" is a new video that links the macho event of jumping out of aircraft and driving a vehicle. The central message is that just like every jump counts, every drive counts. Produced by the Army Safety Center in conjunction with the Airborne School, this additional intervention tool is available at installation safety offices and local training service centers.

In the Army team, trust is critical. We, as leaders, have to build trust with soldiers. But communication in the form of lip service will not cut it. Soldiers quickly discern the leaders who truly care. Using intervention techniques such as holding the unit may not make you a popular commander, but that is acceptable as long as you are a *respected* commander. We must never forget that soldiers will judge us not by our words, but by what we do. Sometimes tough love is necessary, but it is well worth your being a bit unpopular if it saves a life. 🐻

—BG James E. Simmons, Director of Army Safety

FY 2002 ROLL CALL

This issue of *Countermeasure* recounts the soldiers who died in POV and motorcycle accidents in FY02. Most of these fatalities cite the same causes of speed, fatigue, alcohol, traffic rule violations, and not wearing seatbelts over and over again. These are vivid testaments to the fact that there are no new causes, just new victims—year after year after year. Yet, just identifying hazards won't save a soldier's life...leader involvement is key in gaining control and stopping this tragic loss of life. If you need help in establishing a POV safety program, call us. Remember that your safety and well-being are important to us here at the Safety Center, as well as the Army and our Nation.

E3, Male (19), 63W10: Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in was involved in an accident. Causes of the accident are unknown.

E4, Male (24), 75FLDHO: Soldier died when another vehicle crossed the centerline, striking SM's vehicle head-on. The other driver is suspected of DUI.

E7, Male (39), 11B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries while driving to drill when another vehicle crossed the centerline, striking SM's vehicle head-on.

E1, Male (21), 19D: Soldier was killed during the early morning hours while speeding in excess of 80 miles per hour while racing another vehicle. SM lost control of the vehicle and skidded 325 feet before striking a guardrail. The driver was killed, and a passenger was found unconscious and remains in a coma. Both the driver and passenger were at a club drinking the night before the accident.

E5, Male (28), 75H: Soldier died when he lost control of his vehicle and struck a telephone pole.

E4, Male (24), 31U: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the right rear tire of the vehicle he was riding in exploded and the vehicle overturned, ejecting him. SM suffered massive head injuries, which resulted in death. SM was one of five soldiers involved in the accident.

E5, Male (36), 13K: Soldier was killed when his motorcycle struck another vehicle while crossing an intersection. SM was not wearing reflective equipment at the time of the accident.

E3, Male (20), 11B: Soldier died when the vehicle he was riding in ran off the roadway and struck a guardrail. SM was not wearing a seatbelt. The driver of the vehicle, also a soldier, was driving while fatigued, was not wearing a seatbelt, and suffered serious injuries in the accident.

E5, Male (22), 13B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when his vehicle crossed the roadway into the opposite lane and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer. SM's family member, a passenger, also was killed. It is believed that SM was driving while fatigued at the time of the accident.

E4, Male (39), 91C: Soldier operating a motorcycle was killed when he failed to stop for a red light. A passenger received serious injuries in the accident.

E5, Male (30), 31U: Soldier died when a 15-ton cement truck executed an illegal U-turn and crossed the centerline into the path of his motorcycle. SM was thrown from the motorcycle, and his body struck a light pole along the right side of the highway.

E5, Male (24), and E4, Male (22): Soldier sustained fatal injuries after he lost control of his vehicle while entering a curve speeding. SM's vehicle crossed the centerline and collided with a tractor-trailer. There were four passengers in the rear of the vehicle, with only three seatbelts available. In addition to the driver, one of the passengers, also a soldier, was killed in the accident.

E4, Male (20): Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in crossed the centerline into oncoming traffic. SM was not wearing a seatbelt.

The driver and two passengers, also soldiers, received minor injuries in the accident.

E6, Male (33), 91R: Soldier died when the motorcycle he was operating struck a guardrail.

E4, Male (20), 11B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the vehicle he was driving failed to negotiate a gradual curve, left the roadway, over-corrected, rolled an undetermined number of times, and came to rest upside down on its roof. SM was ejected out the right front passenger window and was not wearing a seatbelt.

E3, Male (19), and E3, Male (21), 75P: Soldiers were killed when the vehicle they were riding in crossed the roadway, ran off the road shoulder and up an embankment, and struck a tree. The driver of the vehicle was not licensed and had been drinking when he lost control of the vehicle.

E4, Male (26), 31U, and E4, Male (20), 11B: Soldiers died when the vehicle they were street racing left the roadway, struck a utility pole, and overturned, coming to rest on its roof. Alcohol is suspected in the accident.

E3, Male (21), 35E: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he fell asleep at the wheel and collided head-on with another vehicle on a foggy morning. Two other soldiers also were involved in the accident.

O4, Male (45), 66H0D: Soldier was killed in a one-vehicle accident en route to unit training.

E5, Male (21), 67T20: Soldier died when his friend lost control of the vehicle he was driving and crashed into an oncoming car.

E4, Male (28), 13B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when his vehicle crossed the centerline and struck an oncoming vehicle. SM was not wearing a seatbelt, and autopsy results indicated that SM had a blood alcohol content of .262.

E3, Male (21), 63S1P: Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in crossed into the opposite lane while speeding into a curve, resulting in a head-on collision.

E3, Male (23), 92G: Soldier died when his vehicle collided head-on with another vehicle that was driving in the wrong lane. The driver of the other vehicle also was killed.

E3, Male (20), 63W: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he jumped from the vehicle he was riding in and was run over by the same vehicle. SM was not wearing a seatbelt, and alcohol was involved.

E1, Male (21), 12B: Soldier was killed when he lost control of his vehicle and ran off the road, striking an embankment and large rock. SM was speeding and attempting to pass another vehicle at the time of the accident, and was not wearing his seatbelt.

E3, Male (18), 73C: Soldier died when the vehicle he was riding in swerved, struck a guardrail, exited the roadway, vaulted, landed on four wheels in the center median, and then dropped into a deep culvert, eventually landing upside down and catching on fire. SM was trapped in the vehicle and burned to death. The driver, also a soldier (E3), received serious injuries and lost his leg.

W4, Male (54), 153BC: Soldier sustained fatal injuries on the way home from annual training when another vehicle crossed the centerline and struck his vehicle. The other driver stated that he fell asleep at the wheel before the accident.

E4, Male (30), 62B: Soldier was killed when he lost control of the vehicle he was driving on ice while speeding. SM's vehicle was struck by another vehicle and crossed over the centerline into oncoming traffic, where it was struck head-on by another vehicle.

E3, Male (19), 63B: Soldier died when he lost control of his vehicle, ran off the road, and struck a pole.

E5, Female (30): Soldier sustained fatal injuries when she jumped from a moving vehicle. Both the SM and the driver had been drinking.

E5, Male (25), 91W: Soldier was killed when the driver of the vehicle he was riding in attempted to pass another vehicle while speeding, lost control of the vehicle, and ran off the road. The vehicle rolled several times. The driver had been drinking.

E4, Male (24), 88M: Soldier died when his vehicle was struck head-on by a semi-truck while attempting to pass another semi. Two of SM's friends also were killed in the accident.

E4, Male (23), 67T: Soldier sustained fatal injuries after the vehicle he was driving left the roadway and struck a tree head-on. SM had left a Super Bowl party and was operating his POV at high rate of speed. SM was not wearing a seatbelt and had been drinking.

O3, Male (26), 13A00: Soldier was killed when his vehicle was involved in a head-on collision.

E1, Male (18), and E1, Male (18), 19K: Two soldiers died in a multiple-car accident. Causes are unknown.

E7, Male (37), 18B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he lost control of his motorcycle, crossed the centerline, collided with a concrete light pole, and was thrown head-first into the pole, hitting a concrete control box with his forehead. SM was speeding at the time of the accident.

E5, Male (27), 31U: Soldier was killed when the driver of the vehicle he was riding in lost control of the vehicle, crossed into the opposite lane, and struck a power pole with the rear end of the vehicle. The driver was admitted to the hospital for fractures to the vertebrae in his neck.

E4, Male (23), 63T: Soldier died when he ran a red light on his POV, clipped another vehicle, and struck a median in the early morning hours. The vehicle rolled and came to a stop on its roof on the side of the road. SM was not wearing a seatbelt and was partially ejected from the vehicle and crushed during the rollover.

E6, Male (26), 11B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he was attempting to enter a crowded driveway on a motorcycle and saw that another motorcycle and a female pedestrian blocked the entrance. SM veered abruptly to avoid hitting the parked motorcycle and the pedestrian and, while attempting to jump the curb, lost control of the motorcycle and struck a palm tree.



E3, Male (19), 13B: Soldier and passenger were killed in a single-vehicle accident. The driver of the vehicle was DUI and speeding at the time of the accident.

E5, Male (34), 96R: Soldier died when the vehicle he was driving hit a guardrail, flipped, and landed upside down in a canal 15 to 20 feet deep while attempting to pass another vehicle. SM was on leave and driving in the early morning hours with no headlights on.

E3, Male (18), 52C: Soldier sustained fatal injuries while driving back to home station after dropping his girlfriend off in another state. SM failed to negotiate a curve and over-corrected his vehicle, which veered back on the roadway into oncoming traffic.

E6, Male (31), 14S: Soldier was killed in a vehicle accident on his way to drill. The accident was caused by zero visibility due to smoke produced by a grass fire.

O1, Male (23), 12A: Soldier died after his vehicle rear-ended a semi-truck while attempting to pass a line of vehicles. The police report indicates that following too closely and inattentive driving were the causes of the collision with the trailer.



E4, Male (22), 63J: Soldier sustained fatal injuries after his vehicle collided head-on with another vehicle in the early-morning hours. SM was speeding on his way back to home station at the time of the accident.

E4, Male (43), 13B: Soldier was killed when he over-corrected and rolled his vehicle, striking a tree. SM was intoxicated and driving at a high rate of speed while attempting to pass another vehicle at the time of the accident.

E2, Male (23), 63A: Soldier died when he lost control of his vehicle while speeding. SM was ejected from the vehicle during the accident.

E7, Male: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he lost control of the motorcycle he was operating and ran off the roadway, striking a road sign.

O3, Male (34), 65D: Soldier was killed when he swerved the motorcycle he was driving to miss a dog and hit a culvert. SM was not wearing a helmet.

E3, Male (21): Soldier died in an early morning, single-vehicle accident. SM was driving after light to moderate physical activity and had had no rest at the time of the accident.

E5, Male (38), 54B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when his POV left the roadway and struck a bridge abutment.

E5, Male (27), 63D: Soldier was killed when a family member who was driving the vehicle he was riding in lost control of the vehicle. SM's family member was speeding and attempting to change lanes at the time he lost control, sending the vehicle into a skid and overturning it. SM was going to the airport to return to home station at the time of the accident.

E4, Male (20), 14J: Soldier died when his POV was involved in a multiple-car accident. SM's vehicle crossed the center lane, collided with two vehicles, and caught fire.

E3, Male (20), 11B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the vehicle he was riding in ran off the road for unknown reasons. All four of the vehicle's occupants were ejected. SM was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the accident.

E5, Male (39), 92Y: Soldier was killed when the motorcycle he was driving struck a median in the middle of an intersection. SM was not wearing a helmet and was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident.

E5, Male (27), 77F: Soldier died when he ran a stop sign on a motorcycle and was hit by another vehicle. SM was not licensed to operate a motorcycle and was not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident. Speed also could have been a factor in the accident.

E4, Male (36), 11B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries after he failed to maintain his lane and veered to the right of the roadway.

The vehicle's front wheel struck the face of the concrete median and ejected SM onto the roadway. Overconfidence, a high rate of speed, and alcohol consumption were factors involved in the accident.

E4, Female (19), 43M: Soldier was killed while stopped to render assistance at an accident site. An oncoming vehicle struck a pole, causing the pole to strike SM.

E6, Male (36): Soldier died when he lost control of his vehicle while attempting to make a turn. SM was driving during the early morning hours when he made a 90-degree right turn, turning wide and to the left in order to make the turn. SM's vehicle veered too far left and hit the left curb, causing it to go out of control.

E3, Male (21), 61W: SM sustained fatal injuries when the POV he was riding in ran off the roadway and into a ditch, overturning an unknown number of times.

E6, Male (27), 14R: Soldier was killed when the motorcycle he was driving left the roadway and struck a concrete wall and metal pole. SM was not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident.

O2, Male (28), 88A00: Soldier died when he lost control of the motorcycle he was driving while negotiating an interchange between two highways. SM struck a road sign and a vehicle before being pinned and dragged underneath a second vehicle. SM was driving at night, speeding, and not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident.

E4, Female: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when she lost control of her vehicle. Both the SM and civilian driver involved in the accident were killed.

E5, Male (27), 77F: Soldier was killed when he lost control of his motorcycle in a curve and rear-ended a moving pickup truck. SM was exceeding the posted speed limit and traveling at an estimated 105 mph at the time of the accident. SM was not wearing required safety equipment and was driving without a license and MSF card. Alcohol use is suspected in the accident.

E4, Male (27), 88N: Soldier died when the motorcycle he was operating was struck by a POV at an intersection.

E4, Female (20), 75F: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the POV she was riding in was involved in an accident. Causes are unknown.

E1, Male (20), 19K: Soldier was killed when he lost control of his vehicle as he approached a curve in the road while speeding. SM's vehicle left the roadway and struck several trees, and then split apart in two pieces. SM was ejected from the vehicle.

E2, Male (19), 63S: Soldier died when he reportedly ran a stoplight on his POV and collided with a police vehicle.

E2, Male (21), 11X: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the vehicle he was riding in was involved in a head-on collision.

E5, Male (33): Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was driving was involved in a head-on collision.

E4, Male (22), 92G, and E3, Female (23), 92G: Two of four soldiers died when the driver of a POV lost control of the vehicle and struck a tree. Of the fatalities, neither the driver nor the passenger were wearing seatbelts.

E5, Male (23): Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the motorcycle he was operating struck a concrete median head-on.

These are vivid testaments to the fact that there are no new causes, just new victims—year after year after year.

E5, Male (33), 88M: Soldier was killed when his vehicle was involved in a nine-car pileup caused by low visibility due to fog and smoke from a nearby forest fire. SM had been on leave with his parents, who also were killed in the accident.

E4, Male (25), 45B10: Soldier died when he lost control of his motorcycle and struck a curb. SM was not wearing a helmet.

E2, Male (24), 92G: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he lost control of his POV, ran off the road, and struck a telephone pole. SM was speeding when he lost control of the vehicle.

E1, Male (21): Soldier was killed when the motorcycle he was riding collided with a vehicle and spun out of control.

E3, Male (26), 31L: Soldier died when he lost control of his vehicle. The vehicle ran off the road and hit a tree.

E6, Male (36), 92G: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the motorcycle he was driving struck the front of a commercial truck at a high rate of speed. The truck was attempting to make a left-hand turn at an intersection at the time of the accident.

O2, Male (33): Soldier was killed in a single-vehicle accident. Causes are unknown.

E5, Male: Soldier died when his POV was rear-ended by another vehicle while stopped at a traffic light.

O2, Male (25), 12A: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when his vehicle struck another vehicle making a left turn.

E3, Male (20), 13B: Soldier was killed when he pulled into the path of a semi-truck on his POV, resulting in a collision.

O4, Male (37), 31A: Soldier died when he fell asleep at the wheel and crossed the centerline. SM was driving after being up and working for more than 24 hours.

E3, Male (21), 11B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he was hit by a semi-truck while walking. SM was under the influence at the time of the accident.

E3, Male (21): Soldier was killed when he lost control of and was thrown from the motorcycle he was driving.

E3, Female (25): Soldier died when she was involved in a head-on collision.

E7, Male (40), 91M: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he lost control of his motorcycle while negotiating a curve. SM was speeding and had been drinking when he ran off the road and hit a tree.

E3, Female (19), 55B: Soldier was killed when the vehicle she was riding in passed a semi-truck, drifted off the shoulder, over-corrected, and rolled several times. SM was sleeping in the back seat of the vehicle at the time of the accident and was ejected, landing in the median.

E4, Male (21), 63H: Soldier died when his vehicle left the roadway, entered a ditch, became airborne, and hit the ground and then a tree.

E1, Male (19), 88M: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he over-corrected his vehicle after it ran off the road on his way to drill. SM's vehicle skidded across the roadway, became airborne, and landed down a steep embankment. SM was not wearing a seatbelt.

O5, Male (61), 65D: Soldier was killed when he was struck by a vehicle while walking to his POV. SM was leaving for weekend drill at the time of the accident.

E6, Male (37), 88H: Soldier died when the driver of the vehicle he was riding in lost control of the vehicle, ran off the road, and struck a tree.

E4, Male (23), 54B: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when his POV struck a bridge abutment head-on.

E6, Male (31), 67T: Soldier was killed when his vehicle rolled several times.

E3, Male (19): Soldier died when the motorcycle he was operating collided with an ATV four-wheeler.

O1, Male (22): Soldier sustained fatal injuries when another vehicle struck the POV he was driving head-on.

E5, Male (25), 11B: Soldier was killed when he lost control of his dirt bike.

E3, Female (19), 55B: Soldier died when her POV left the roadway and struck an abandoned vehicle.

E4, Male (25), 88M: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he lost control of his motorcycle and collided with a guardrail.

E7, Male: Soldier was killed when his motorcycle struck a POV turning into his path.

E5, Male (36), and E3, Male (23): Two soldiers died when their POV ran off the road, struck a guardrail, and overturned.

E4, Male (23): Soldier sustained fatal injuries when the pickup truck he was riding in went over the guardrail of an overpass and overturned onto the road below. SM was riding in the rear of the pickup at the time of the accident.

E4, Male (23), 88M: Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in left the roadway, crashed through a ramp, and entered a reservoir. SM was trapped under the water and drowned.

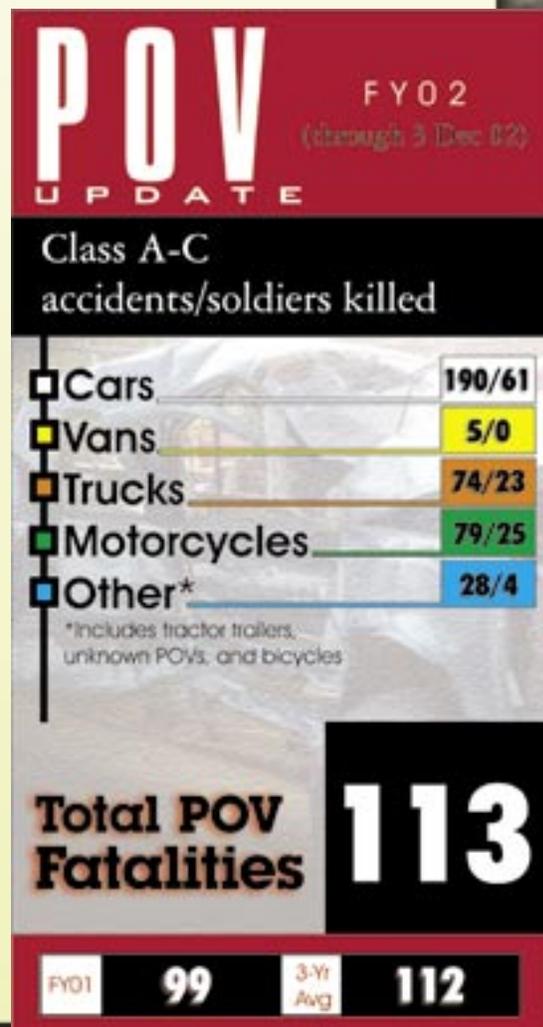
E5, Male (28), 31P: Soldier died when he lost control of his POV due to hydroplaning and it struck another vehicle. SM was ejected from the vehicle.

E5, Male (41), 92A: Soldier sustained fatal injuries when he was ejected from his POV in a single-vehicle accident.

E4, Male: Soldier was killed when the vehicle he was riding in crossed the center median and struck a parked car.

E5, Male (29): Soldier died when he exited a moving car.

E4, Male (23): Soldier sustained fatal injuries while illegally crossing an autobahn. 🚗



The story I am about to tell is much the same as any other that one would expect to see in a safety publication. The typical “it was just like any other day” line would apply to this story, except for one thing—this time, it involved me.

I am a company Aviation Safety Officer (ASO), and I address motorcycle safety in each month’s safety meetings. This past summer I coordinated a Motorcycle Safety Foundation class, which was taught exclusively for our unit personnel. We were all taking the correct steps to ride our motorcycles safely. Throughout the

the double-yellow line on this two-lane road in order to pass me just as I turned left. The right front of the other guy’s car cut through my left rear shock and continued up the left side of my motorcycle, opening it up like a tin can. The inside of the engine was exposed, the gas tank caved in, the foot pegs were ripped off, and my left leg was nearly severed. On impact, I went up into the windshield and over the top of his car, while my motorcycle went under the right front tire. The driver continued on his merry way as I lay bleeding to death in the opposite lane of traffic.

WATCHING MY GIRLS GROW UP

course, the instructor mentioned the “other guy” as a hazard we would face. As it turns out, it was the other guy that found me one fateful night. I just didn’t know it.

At work that day, the mission was an end-of-stage evaluation for two pilots completing their readiness level progression in the company. Just like any other day, we executed the flight debrief following the mission. We then sat around for several hours explaining to our two newest pilots what life would be like in their day-to-day duties. After that, just like any other day, I hopped on my motorcycle and headed home. As I neared my neighborhood, I slowed, signaled, and turned left...just like any other day. The events that followed would forever alter my life and the lives of those around me.

About 30 minutes after I left work, my wife received a phone call informing her that I had suffered a serious injury in an accident just six houses from home. When she arrived at the scene, my injuries were too grotesque for her to look at. When she asked me what had happened, I simply did not know. To this day, I still have difficulty recalling what happened, although I am starting to remember bits and pieces. What I have learned of the night’s events, I hope others will learn from.

The car behind me had decided to cross



After being discovered by passers-by, I was taken to the military hospital on post and later flown to a university hospital approximately 200 miles away. That is where my left leg was amputated approximately 9 inches below the knee. As my wife was being driven to the university hospital she received her second shocking phone call in a matter of just a few hours, informing her of the loss of my leg.

How could this happen? I had done everything right. I attended a Motorcycle Safety Foundation course, wore the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), and abided by all the laws. But the other guy was out there that night and just happened to be behind me. I went from being an athletic

34-year-old to an amputee just trying to deal with reality.

The driver that struck my motorcycle that evening was apprehended a few miles down the road, driving home as if nothing had happened. Driving home with an imprint of my head on his windshield. He has been indicted on numerous charges and is awaiting trial. It was one of many alcohol-related incidents and not his first DUI.

Since the accident, I have had a lot of time to reflect and listen to what people around me have to say. A lot of what I hear is enlightening, but some is absolutely shocking. I hear a lot of discussion and controversy regarding the use of helmets and other





protective gear. Please read the next sentence slowly and read it numerous times.

The reason I am here to write this

article is because I was wearing ALL of the PPE required to be worn while riding a motorcycle.

I have had several people tell me that if they were to lose a leg, they would rather just die. These same people have families. I promise you that the road to recovery has been and continues to be extremely difficult, especially for my family. But I guarantee you that they would rather deal with the road to recovery than the road to the cemetery. That is why I agreed to write this story.

As I mentioned before, I am an ASO. Before, I would always discuss motorcycle and POV safety in meetings, but now I have an understanding that I hope the readers of this article will never reach. I am much more adamant about getting others to understand the importance of PPE. A traumatic event like this affects so many more people than just the victim. Believe me, I know. Had it not been for our friends and people we did not even know that well, this would have been so much more difficult. So, if you are reading this and thinking only about yourself, you are thinking WRONG!

Not too long ago, I saw the photos of my motorcycle and the other guy's car for the very first time. His windshield looked like someone had thrown a bowling ball at it. Unfortunately, the bowling ball was in the form of my head. Without a doubt, my helmet saved my life. Don't get me wrong, my scalp was sore for a while, but I did not suffer a major head injury. No skull fractures, no open wounds. I was just sore, a small price to pay considering what could have happened.

I also was wearing protective eyewear, a leather jacket, long pants, boots, leather gloves, and reflective material. As a result, I had no "road rash," no other broken bones,

and my hands were not even injured. I have had a few people tell me that in certain situations, any amount of safety equipment will not save you. That may be correct, but this is my answer to him or her: *You do not have the luxury of choosing how and when the other guy meets you in an accident.* So, if you don't look as cool because you have "helmet head" and your hair is messed up, bring a hat. If wearing the proper PPE improves my chances of surviving and being there for my family, then give it to me.

I sustained an amputated leg. As tragic as that sounds, that was pretty much the extent of it. The recovery has been trying at times, more so for my family and friends than me. To them, I apologize. I have learned that I am a work in progress and I accept that. This accident has definitely forced me to redefine the priorities in my life. Trust me, I would rather have the equipment that God gave me, but following the accident, so many other things in my life have gotten better. I was lucky—I was given a second chance.

I am up walking around on two legs again, thanks to some talented surgeons and an extremely talented prosthetist. I was able to go on vacation with my family for some much-needed "family healing" time. I returned to my duties as company ASO within a few months of losing my leg and, if I have my way, I will fly for the U.S. Army again. I am able to go to dinner or a movie with my wife and even take the trash out and cut the grass so she doesn't have to.

At the end of the day, I drive home on that very road and make the same turn that I made that night. Each time, I see the blood stain that is still on the road from my injury. Each time I look at that stain, I simply smile. I smile because, just like any other day, I'm watching my girls grow up. 🐾

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Personnel Injury

Class B

- Soldier's finger was amputated after it was caught in the rear mounting bracket of an engine pack in an M577A2. SM had been installing the engine pack at the time of the accident.

- Four soldiers received noise injuries to their ears, one soldier sustained burns to his head and injuries to his eyes and nose, and one soldier received cuts and lacerations to his head after an explosion involving two 120mm mortars and two 81mm inserts. SMs had been inspecting the mortars and inserts for classification and turn-in at the time of the accident.

Class C

- Soldier sustained a strain to his neck after the OSV trainer truck he was riding in jostled on steep terrain. SM hit his ballistic helmet on the turret of the vehicle when he was thrown forward after the vehicle made an abrupt stop.

- Soldier received fractures to his arm after the lock ring and split ring discharged from the M985 tire he was re-inflating. SM had not removed the tire and placed it in a tire cage before re-inflation.

and another passenger, both soldiers, were hospitalized for injuries sustained in the accident.

- Soldier was killed when he was ejected from his POV during a one-vehicle accident.

- Soldier was killed when the POV he was riding in left the road, crashed through a ramp, and entered a reservoir. SM was trapped under the water and drowned. The driver of the POV, also a soldier, was uninjured.

- Soldier was killed when the POV he was riding in crossed the center median and struck a parked car. The driver of the vehicle, a civilian, was not injured.

- Soldier sustained permanent brain damage resulting from a skull fracture after he exited a moving vehicle. SM's injuries were caused after he struck his head on the roadway. Alcohol reportedly was involved in the accident.

- Soldier was killed when he was struck by a POV while crossing a road.

Class B

- Soldier's leg was amputated as a result of injuries sustained when he lost control of his POV and the vehicle overturned.

- Soldier and his wife, also a soldier, were injured when he lost control of his vehicle on the way to work. SM1's leg was amputated above the ankle. The degree of injury to SM2 was not reported.

Class C

- Soldier sustained injuries when he lost control of his POV and the vehicle overturned,

ejecting him. SM was pinned by the vehicle and received a crushed pelvis and head injury. The passenger, SM's girlfriend, was 39 weeks pregnant and required a caesarean section; both the passenger and child have recovered.

- Soldier received injuries to his leg when his POV left the roadway and struck the road shoulder. SM was attempting to pass another vehicle on a two-lane highway at the time of the accident.

Class D

- Soldier sustained cuts and lacerations to his head after he rear-ended a moving vehicle on a five-lane interstate highway. SM had been attempting to change lanes at the time of the accident.



Other

Class A

- Soldier was pronounced dead at his home by paramedics after attempts to revive him were unsuccessful. SM's wife called paramedics after she was unable to wake him.

- Soldier drowned after he ran into the woods behind a club and fell into a river.

- Soldier drowned in a hotel jacuzzi. SM was found by a guest at the hotel.

Class C

- Soldier sustained fractures to his nose while playing goalie during a soccer game. SM had leaned over to pick up a ball and was hit by another SM.



POV

Class A

- Soldier was killed when the pick-up truck he was riding in went over the guardrail of an overpass and overturned onto the road below. SM was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from the vehicle. The driver of the vehicle

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