



Al Mawsil  
ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

# Countermeasure

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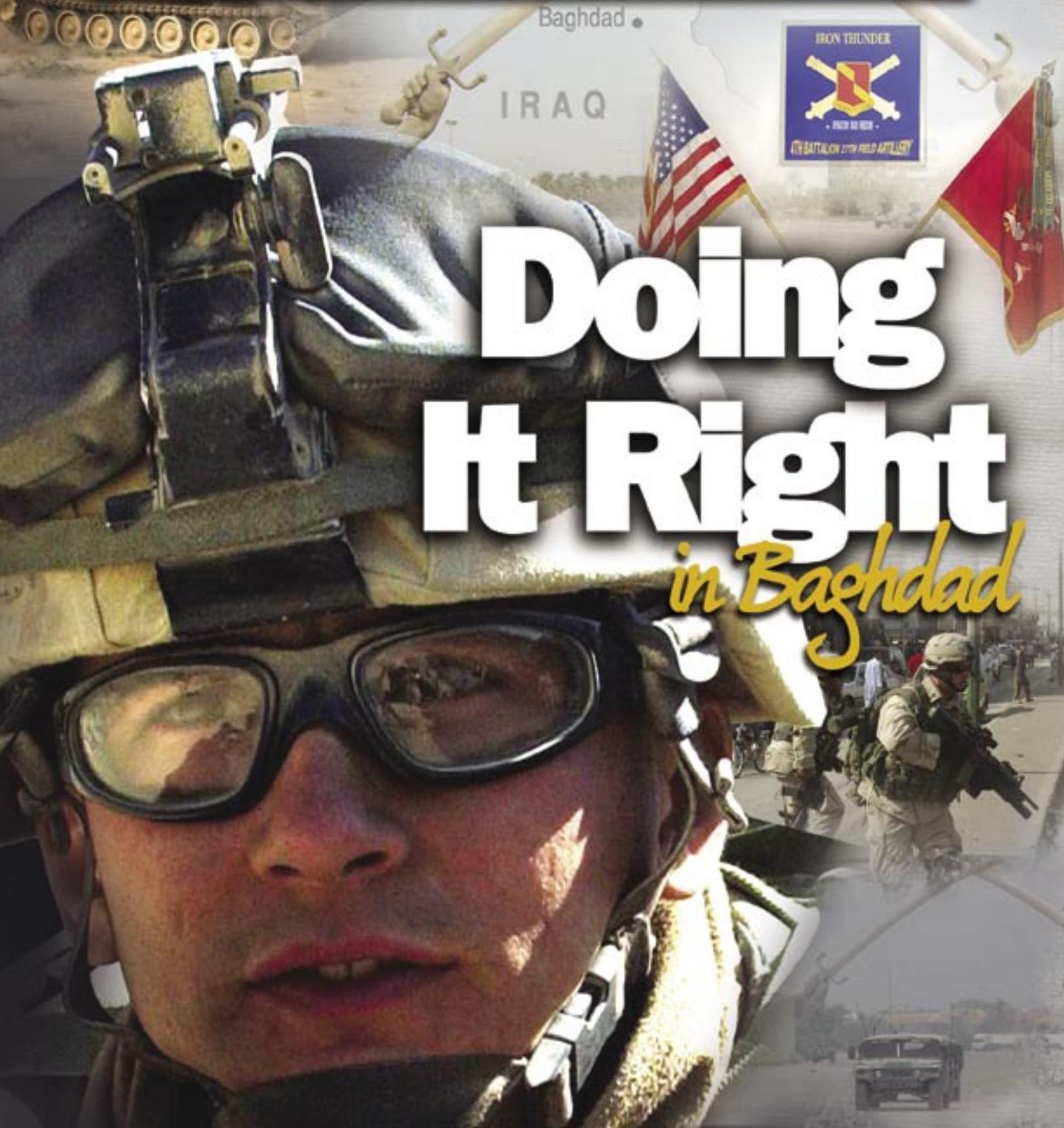
DECEMBER 2003

Baghdad •  
IRAQ



# Doing It Right

*in Baghdad*



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## Safety Success in Korea: Leadership in Action

As our Army continues to operate at an OPTEMPO not seen in 50 years, the safety challenges our commands face are unique and require unique initiatives. As I analyzed recent safety statistics across our MACOMs, Korea's figures caught my attention.

Over the last 5 years, 6.9 percent of the Army's Soldiers have been stationed in Korea; however, Korea has suffered only 4.5 percent of our accident fatalities.

The power of this statistic is significant to me considering the current world environment. For the past 50 years, we've asked our Soldiers in Korea to remain at the highest level of readiness every day. We've asked them to train and operate at that level in one of the world's harshest environments, and to do so with a new team of Soldiers every year. We've been patching the line across from the world's sixth largest Army with 50 years of 1-year Band-Aids™. What could be more challenging? Yet, Korea continues to have a lower accident rate than the Army at large.

Now we are asking the entire Army, including the Guard and Reserve, to prepare for and face an unpredictable enemy in a harsh environment with inexperienced Soldiers. My hypothesis is that through 50 years of lessons learned, Korea has developed some safety initiatives that could be shared as Army "best practices." Although I've never been stationed in Korea, I visited there for the first

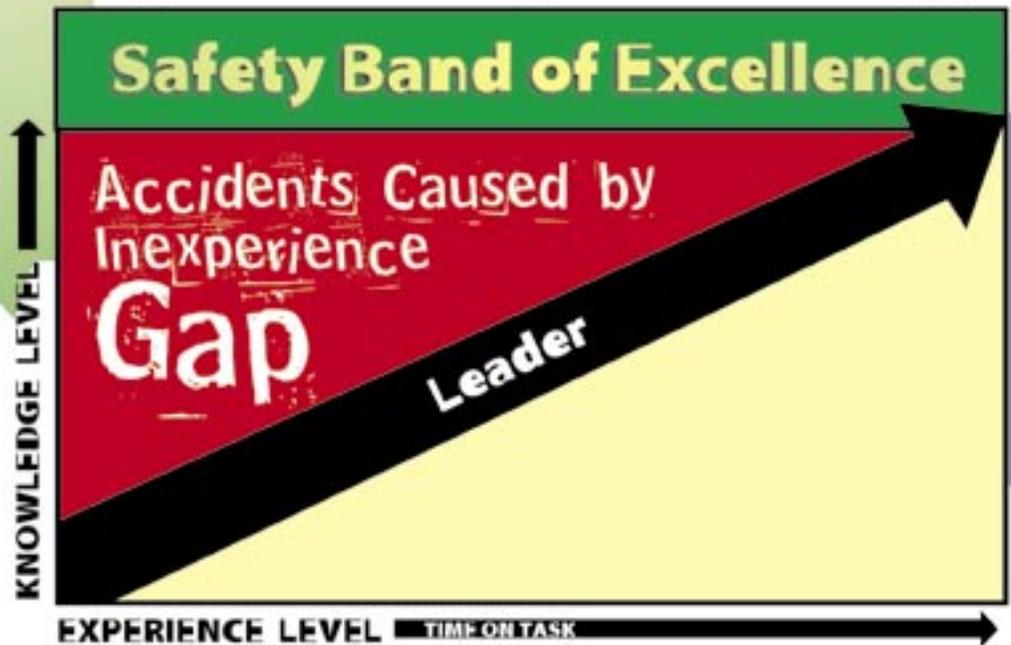


## The CODY Model (Leader Inexperience Gap)

time in years last month. What I found was an organization that understands its hazards and overcomes them through effective control measures. The 2nd Infantry Division's (2ID's) Convoy Operations Procedures provide some excellent examples.

The unimproved roads and bad weather make every convoy movement in Korea a high-risk event. Added to that challenge are the 250 new Soldiers who report for duty with 2ID each week. Many of those Soldiers do not have a driver's license. The 2ID's control measures include **maintaining "Movement" as its own mission essential task list (METL) task**, and requiring each new Soldier to attend its **Division Support Command (DISCOM) Driver's Academy**. In addition, each serial of two or more vehicles must follow the planning guidelines in FM 55-30, *Field Manual for Convoy Operations*. These control measures have proven effective. Last year, 2ID conducted 31,500 convoy movements and suffered only two fatalities. The resulting accident rate was only .07 per 100,000 miles.

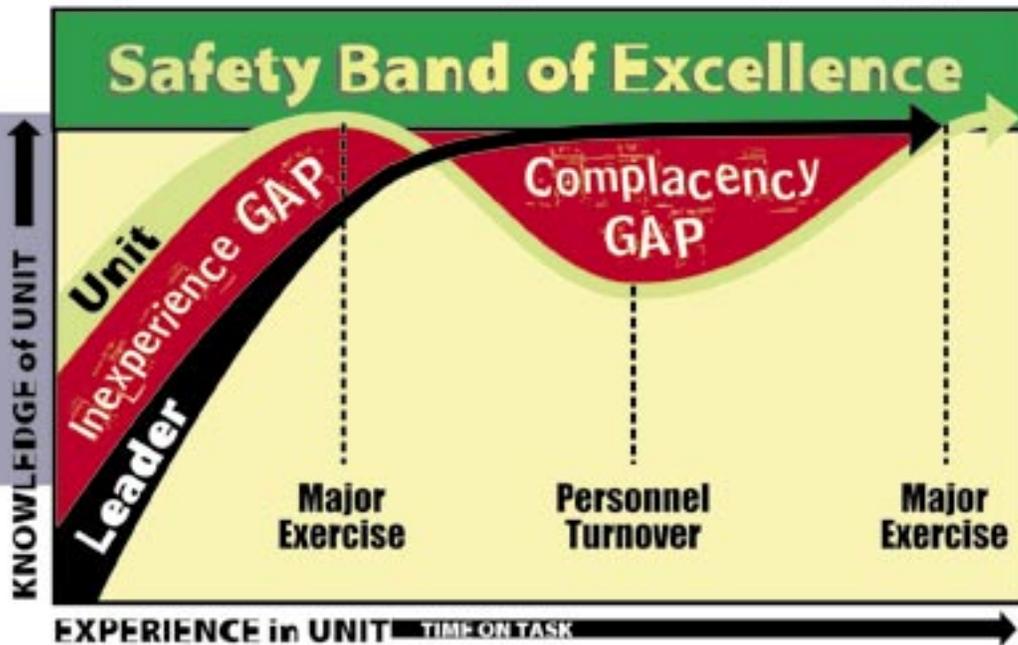
Control measures, however, do nothing unless they are implemented and supervised by leaders. To ensure that



happens, 8th Army leadership applies the "3-Deep" concept, involving leaders at multiple levels to provide young leaders with the necessary knowledge.

When Soldiers sign into 2ID, they are given a small pamphlet called *The Tribal History*. That history lists every fatal accident in 2ID over the last 10 years, along with their causes. On Day 1, senior leaders give junior leaders the historical knowledge to keep their Soldiers safe. During mission planning, junior leaders must brief their commanders in detail on their control measures and contingency plans. Mission briefs are NOT done in passing or over the phone. Commanders train junior leaders on the five steps of risk management so they can safely perform their mission. The junior leaders then reinforce those five steps to their Soldiers in the "safety-minute" just prior to mission execution.

# The Korea Model (Leader Complacency Gap)



Korea has identified a further hazard threatening the Army as junior leaders gain experience. I have previously discussed the hazard of the “**Inexperience Gap**” in the Cody Model, showing how accidents occur when junior leaders lack experience in mitigating risks. Time on task (experience) reduces this hazard and enhances junior leaders’ risk management skills. Until that point, it’s the junior leaders’ inexperience that puts themselves and their Soldiers at increased risk.

But there is a second risk that can occur after these junior leaders have gained some experience. As junior leaders remain in position after a high OPTEMPO period, new Soldiers will move into their units to replace others who are leaving. When this turnover occurs, those junior leaders’ safety experience will exceed that of their new Soldiers. However, in the young leader’s mind, he may still think of his unit

being as capable as it was during the high OPTEMPO point. This mindset can cause junior leaders to *assume* their Soldiers will understand and correctly implement control measures. This assumption breeds complacency and can cause leaders not to properly supervise their new, less-experienced Soldiers.

Units in Korea are not risk-averse; they don’t have that luxury. They must be ready to “fight tonight” every night. What they have done is identify the challenges of their mission and mitigate risks by combining safety initiatives and good old-fashioned leadership. As the rest of the Army’s challenges look more and more like Korea’s, we can look to Korea’s 50 years of experience for guidance. 🇰🇷

**Keep Your Leader Lights On!**

*Joe Smith*

BG Joseph A. Smith

• Irbil  
• Kirkuk

Baghdad •

IRAQ



# Doing





**A** bus load of terrorists tries to crash the gate at a forward operating base in Baghdad, Iraq, and is stopped by heavy machine gun fire. A mortar round falls near a group of sleeping Soldiers, reminding them that post-war Baghdad is a very hostile place. But it's not just the violence directed against Soldiers that is a threat. Sometimes the enemy is inside the compound, right inside the Soldiers' BDUs. It's an enemy the Soldier cannot see; but he can see the carnage that follows. As SFC Cagle relates, one unit has found the key to fighting this enemy. And they are beating him right in the middle of Baghdad.

# g It Right *in Baghdad*

**SFC BENNIE CAGLE**  
Ground Accident Investigator  
U.S. Army Safety Center

I was recently in Baghdad investigating an accident when I stumbled upon an unusual situation. The unit I lived with had made risk management so much a part of their daily operations that it had become instinctive—they no longer even noticed they were doing it. You might think every unit would do this—but if you did, you'd be wrong. During the past 18 months I have carried out risk assessments on combat units deployed throughout the Middle East. I looked at standards and discipline, leadership and supervision, risk management, maintenance, structures and facilities, weapons safety, physical training programs, traffic, and new personnel integration. But never during that time did I see a unit make risk management a part of their everyday operations as seamlessly as

the 4-27th Field Artillery (FA).

The 4-27th FA maintains very high standards. Young Soldiers, NCOs, and officers were all highly disciplined. The entire time I was with the unit I never saw a Soldier out of uniform, and each Soldier was moving with a purpose. The unit's leaders were very visible—supervising Soldiers, providing them guidance, and taking an active part in the unit's missions. I saw the command sergeant major going to positions on the perimeter to check on the welfare and status of the Soldiers. All the NCOs and Soldiers I talked with expressed confidence in their leaders and pride in their unit. They had been in country 4 months and still had 8 months left to serve. However, I heard no complaints about the mission or the unit's leaders.

# Doing It Right in Baghdad

4-27th FA heads out on a mission in Baghdad.

## Stopping Accidental Discharges

Weapons safety was stressed constantly. At first, they had problems with negligent discharges—something all units seem to struggle with. Soldiers would forget to drop the magazine, inadvertently chamber a round, and fire it into the clearing barrel. The 4-27th FA added an extra step to their clearing procedures by having Soldiers drop their weapon's magazine and hand it to the NCO supervising the clearing barrel. Soldiers were not allowed to clear their weapons until the NCO had the magazine in-hand. This stopped the rash of accidental discharges.

## A Safe Motor Pool

I walked through the motor pool and found the mechanics hard at work, with the NCOs right there with them. I saw jack stands being used, and the mechanics were being good environmental custodians. They had not brought a tire

cage with them when they deployed, which was a huge concern for the NCOs. They knew that changing a split ring tire is a very hazardous task. I worked with the battalion executive officer (XO) to help find a tire cage close enough to support his unit. As it turned out, the unit that shared the compound had a tire cage, so the XO worked out a co-use agreement. This concern for the mechanics' safety—followed by immediate action—showed a commitment from the battalion chain of command that I saw the entire time I was with the unit.

## A Safe Living Environment

The Soldiers lived in a two-story building that was kept in excellent repair and had good air conditioning. The battalion noted there were not enough fire extinguishers in the building, so they went out and purchased some. The battalion fire marshal mapped out a fire evacuation plan and checked the building frequently. If this all sounds like business as usual, don't lose sight of the fact these Soldiers are in a hostile environment and being engaged daily.

The battalion set up a tent with weights in it for the Soldiers and designated a running

The main entrance to Forward Operating Base "Thunder." Alert guards stopped a busload of armed terrorists from breaking through this gate into the compound.



## IRAQ

area inside the compound so the Soldiers could concentrate on their fitness. The speed limit for HMMWVs inside the compound was 5 mph, and all large vehicles were ground guided. When I went to the mobile kitchen trailer (MKT) to get breakfast, I noticed a Soldier sitting in a chair between the hand washing point and the MKT. He was there at every meal, so I asked him what he was doing. He was a battalion medic. He explained the unit understood that a Soldier who was too sick to perform his mission because of poor field sanitation put the unit at risk. His job was to make sure every Soldier washed his hands before entering the MKT. He added that the number of Soldiers going to sick call decreased after this measure was put into place. He would not take credit for the decrease, but instead insisted the Soldiers were becoming more resistant to the environment. I think this is an example of a Soldier making a difference.

### Getting Replacements Trained

The battalion received replacements while I was residing with them. The chain of command set up an integration program to ensure new Soldiers completed the battalion's Individual Readiness Training (IRT) before going on any missions. Although the new Soldiers had received IRT in Germany before deploying, the leaders still ordered them to go through the battalion's training. Unit leaders wanted to be sure the new Soldiers were trained properly for the battalion's current mission. This gave the Soldiers and their leaders an opportunity to get used to working together (team building) before going onto the streets of Baghdad.

The 4-27th FA, a part of the 1st Armored Division, has successfully incorporated risk management into their everyday operations. They have lowered their overall risk by



**The 4-27th FA's Mobile Kitchen Trailer provided meals to soldiers only after they had washed their hands. This focus on field sanitation helped keep soldiers healthy.**



**Although open-air maintenance was the norm, the 4-27th's maintainers were able to work more safely thanks to an agreement to share a tire cage with another organization.**

recognizing hazards and adjusting the way they do business to include safety in their daily operations. They have broken the code on risk management and are quietly setting the example for the rest of today's Army. 🚗

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# FORT POLK

## Forging the Safety Spirit

**JOHN COSTA**  
Safety Manager  
Joint Readiness Training Center  
Fort Polk, LA

To safely train for the dangerous mission of warfighting is a bold challenge, one being met successfully at Fort Polk, LA, and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). There, Soldiers are given tough, realistic training to fight the ongoing war on terrorism and to meet the challenges to America's security, wherever those challenges arise. Meshed with the need to prepare Soldiers for war is a concern for the welfare of the Soldiers, civilians, retirees, and families who work and live at Fort Polk. The "War Against Accidents" is as real there as the War On Terror. It's a war being won because leaders from the commander on down have made winning it a priority.

### Charting the Winning Trend

The accident figures for Fort Polk are as low—and in some cases drastically lower—than they were in FY00. The fact that units can come to Fort Polk and the JRTC and leave intact proves safety can be made to work, even in tough training environments. The charts below show what can happen when a safety program is successful.

### Organization, Equipment, and Initiatives

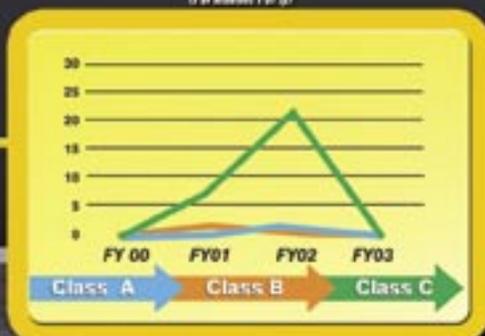
Part of this success story is the organization

and equipment of Fort Polk's safety office. The safety manager is a special staff advisor to the commanding general. The safety office has two teams, one focused on base operations and the other on mission support. The safety office also has tactical equipment including HMMWVs, single channel ground and air radio systems, cameras, and global positioning systems (GPS). This equipment allows the safety office to respond to almost any kind of safety incident.

The command's holistic approach to safety encompasses military members, family members, and civilian employees. There is also a close relationship with the surrounding communities designed to make those communities safer. Examples of safety initiatives and programs are:

- Leading U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) in the establishment of an aggressive driver awareness campaign.
- Improving boater safety by:
  - Mounting GPS on all Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) boats rented by Fort Polk so they can always be located.
  - Mounting marine radios on all MWR boats to improve communication during emergencies.
  - Partnering with the Coast Guard Auxiliary for Coast Guard boating safety courses.
- Implementing standards for civilian

*Fort Polk and JRTC Ground Accidents*  
(Permanent Party)



*Rotational Ground Accidents*





employees who drive materiel handling equipment (MHE).

- Expanding the FORSCOM “Stop, Think, Observe, Plan, and Proceed” (S.T.O.P.P.) risk assessment program.
- Providing the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment with a safety specialist during their deployment.
- Directly interfacing with the operations group prior to, during, and after each JRTC rotation by:
  - Building a working relationship with the planners to identify and resolve potential problems. An example was the development of a mechanism to secure eye-safe lenses to various laser systems.
  - Participating in the daily commander’s battle update brief.
  - Providing a minimum of two ground safety tactical specialists and one aviation safety specialist to support rotations. As a rule, there are at least six specialists involved in the various aspects of each rotation.
  - Providing a Right-Seat Program for rotational safety personnel.
  - Assisting rotational safety personnel.
  - Coordinating with higher headquarters and the U.S. Army Safety Center (USASC) for additional support and advice. A prime example was the additional support obtained for the Stryker

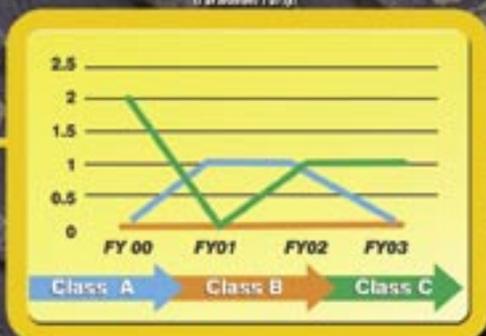
Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) rotation. The safety office got two safety personnel from FORSCOM Safety and five from USASC. Because of this effort and the command emphasis, this rotation had no Class A or B and only three Class C accidents.

- Safety messages, bulletins, signs, and incentives.
- Quarterly safety days and an annual safety fair.
- Annual Bicycle Rodeo.
- Caution at Bus Stops (CABS) program.
- Automated driver’s safety course.
- Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) Experienced Rider Course.
- Initiatives being developed:
  - MSF Basic RiderCourse<sup>SM</sup>.
  - MSF DirtBike School<sup>SM</sup>.
  - Driver simulators for privately owned vehicles and Army motor vehicles.

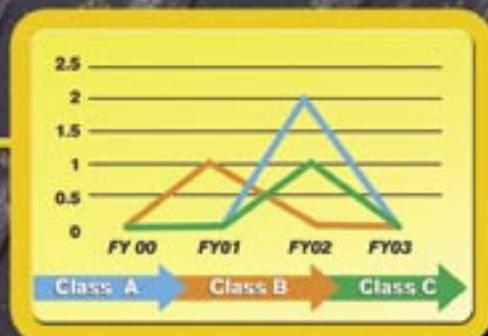
“Forging the Safety Spirit” is more than a slogan at Fort Polk—it’s a way of life. We can never treat safety as an afterthought, nor can we afford the luxury of hindsight. Our goal is to train Soldiers so they can accomplish their missions *safely*. In America’s War On Terror, the War Against Accidents is a vital combat multiplier. 

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*Fort Polk and JRTC Aviation Accidents*  
(Permanent Party)



*Rotational Aviation Accidents*





**T**housands of our Soldiers have been and continue to be deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosovo, not to mention Korea and other locations throughout the world. This being said, I wonder how we, as a fighting force, have missed out on combat soldiering?

Combat soldiering is defined as using or developing skills peculiar to combat, including receiving instructions or training in such skills. (This excludes classroom training.) I am taking a great leap of faith and placing weapons handling procedures, to include loading, unloading, weapons firing, muzzle awareness, and weapons maintenance all under combat soldiering.

In 17 years of combat arms training and deployments, I have been bombarded with training on weapons handling. From the moment you sign your weapon out of the unit arms room until you sign it back in, YOU—the individual Soldier—are responsible for your weapon and its proper use. The first thing I was taught, and which I now pass on to others, is that when you receive a weapon, you ensure the weapon is unloaded (i.e., cleared). You pay attention to where the muzzle is pointed (situational awareness), and make sure the selector is always set on “SAFE.” What sets the standard for a cleared weapon? You guessed it—the technical manual (-10) for that particular type of weapon.

Clearing procedures are nothing more than the weapon’s unloading procedures.

Why, then, do Soldiers inadvertently discharge weapons, damaging equipment and injuring or killing others? I have heard the following comments concerning this issue since my return from Operation Iraqi Freedom:

- Soldiers don’t handle loaded weapons enough in training to be comfortable with ammunition on deployments.
- The experience level and maturity of individual Soldiers and leaders is at its lowest at the section and squadron levels—sometimes even the platoon

## Accidental or Negligent

# Discharge

**SFC RAYMOND HAMILTON**  
Ground Accident Investigator  
U.S. Army Safety Center

level—because of rapid promotions.

- We do not train as we fight.
- A lack of leadership in both the commissioned and non-commissioned officer corps.
- Soldiers are put into a “qualification/range” mentality as far as weapons safety.

These are a few of the comments that stand out in my mind. Not excuses, mind you, but concerns expressed by deployed Soldiers and their leaders—leaders who are responsible for bringing them home safely.

As an Army, how do we address these issues? Remember that today’s Army is based on the “Total Force” concept, which hinges on combining active-duty Soldiers and Army reservists and guardsmen to provide a complete combat package. While Soldier mentality might be the key, leadership experience is the cornerstone, and self-discipline is a must.

The moment you are issued ammunition, you instantly assume a higher level of personal responsibility. I have noticed the change in my own mentality and the mentality of others. You suddenly realize the outcome of any mistake could mean death to yourself or those around you. Or, perhaps you are concerned only with being able to account for all of your ammunition come turn-in time. Either way, there is usually some change in your thinking. Ammunition, then, can be equated to an emotional stress inducer. Training is a factor in this because you have more confidence in your ability if you actually have learned and used the proper procedures for your weapon.

Different units have different levels of training and weapons unique to their mission. NCOs must be trained thoroughly on all weapons under their control or those their unit has in its inventory. NCOs are taught to educate themselves through research and self-motivation. Lack of leader supervision often shows a lack of knowledge on the subject. Leaders who are knowledgeable are always ready and willing to correct a Soldier or peer who is improperly performing a certain task. Reviewing the appropriate technical and field manuals will provide the knowledge to train Soldiers and rigidly enforce standards. As a leader, can you properly function check, load, and unload all of your Soldiers’ weapons? Officers, NCOs, and Soldiers must be familiar with weapons handling to spot check and ensure compliance with orders and guidance.

Maturity and experience are not always one and the same. We have young leaders in positions of responsibility who are technically and tactically proficient, yet still lack maturity. It is hard for Soldiers to take these NCOs seriously when they do not take their own positions seriously. The Army also is running into leaders who, through no fault of their own, are promoted in their career fields while performing additional duty requirements such as a recruiter or drill sergeant. These individuals are then placed in leadership positions without having the needed practical experience. When they go back to working in their primary MOS, they are often task-saturated with the current OPTEMPO and have to learn some hard lessons.

Our training centers do not provide realistic training for current base camp operations. We dress the part in MILES gear, put a magazine of blanks in our weapons, and roll into the box. We do not address weapons clearing procedures when entering base camps or unit tactical operations centers (TOCs), to include clearing areas and procedures for crew-served weapons mounted on vehicles. Our units are left to come up with a standard solution based on their leadership’s experience level.

The “qualification/range” mentality says that most personnel handle ammunition and weapons only well enough to meet military qualification requirements—and even then, only under strict supervision. Because of that, they have more mishaps in real-world scenarios.

Is a weapons discharge an act of negligence or an accident? I guess the answer depends on whether you’re on the muzzle end or the trigger end when the weapon fires. I have looked at all of these hypotheses and can see two sides to each story. Yet, as an NCO, I cannot ride the fence and point fingers. I have to give advice and direction when and if required. I request your input and suggestions to help solve one of the leading safety issues in our Army today. 🐾

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# How Did We Do?

To give our readers a more timely review of how we did in FY03, we began our analysis of the accident data shortly after the end of the fiscal year, even though not all of the accident reports have been received. So, what does this mean? It means the statistics and information included are not yet complete for FY03, but they will give you a snapshot of how we did and some insight into the accident problem areas. To let you know how we did as compared to last year, we used a snapshot of the data for FY02 shortly after the end of the year so the timeframes are comparable.

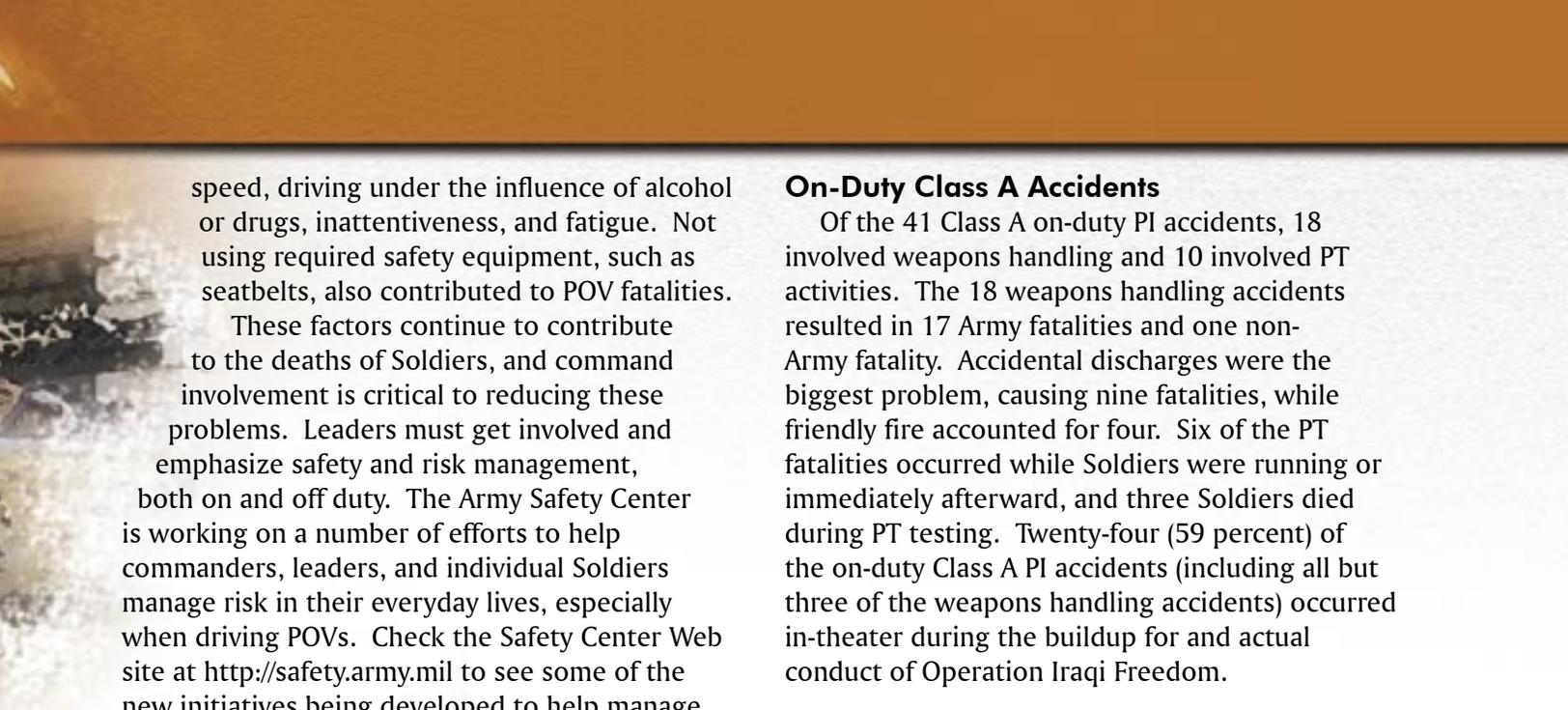
The Army has been extremely busy this fiscal year (FY). Troops were mobilized and deployed in a buildup that led to Operation Iraqi Freedom, which began on 20 March 2003. Although we won the war, the Army still is conducting operations in the area. Because of that, information on FY03 in-theater accidents is still filtering into the Army Safety Center. Future articles will discuss these accidents in more detail.

Overall, the Army experienced a 7-percent decrease in Class A through C ground accidents in FY03 compared to the same time period during FY02. However, there was a 40-percent increase in Class A ground accidents. Most of the increase occurred in Army motor vehicle (AMV) accidents, Army combat vehicle (ACV) accidents, and personnel injury (PI)-other accidents.\*

**MARY ANN THOMPSON**  
Research Psychologist  
U.S. Army Safety Center

### Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)

Although there was no increase in Army POV fatalities from FY02 (110 in FY02 vs. 109 in FY03), POV accidents remain the most common cause of accidental death in the Army. Of the 225 Army accidental fatalities in FY03, 48 percent were POV accidents. The good news is that motorcycle fatalities decreased from 26 in FY02 to 19 in FY03, and truck fatalities went from 23 in FY02 to 17 in FY03. Fatalities in automobiles and vans, however, increased from 55 to 68 and zero to 4, respectively. The most commonly reported causes of fatal POV accidents were excessive



speed, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, inattentiveness, and fatigue. Not using required safety equipment, such as seatbelts, also contributed to POV fatalities.

These factors continue to contribute to the deaths of Soldiers, and command involvement is critical to reducing these problems. Leaders must get involved and emphasize safety and risk management, both on and off duty. The Army Safety Center is working on a number of efforts to help commanders, leaders, and individual Soldiers manage risk in their everyday lives, especially when driving POVs. Check the Safety Center Web site at <http://safety.army.mil> to see some of the new initiatives being developed to help manage risks and prevent accidents.

Although this year's figures suggest we have made progress in reducing POV fatalities, remember many Soldiers were deployed overseas and, therefore, weren't operating their POVs. We might not have tackled our problem as much as avoided it. Leaders should pay particular attention to Soldiers returning from long deployments and counsel them prior to leave or pass, especially if they're taking long trips.

### **Personnel Injury (PI)—Other\***

The largest numbers of Class A through C accidents this fiscal year were PI accidents. In FY03 we had 881 of these accidents, compared to 1,018 in FY02—a 13-percent decrease. The activities that most frequently led to these accidents included: physical training (PT), such as running, jogging, and performing a confidence course—19 percent; “human movement,” such as walking, running, climbing, and mounting—17 percent; and parachuting—16 percent.

Although the overall figures for Class A through C accidents went down, there was an increase in Class A accidents and fatalities. In FY02 the Army reported 39 Class A accidents and 41 Army fatalities. This fiscal year those figures jumped to 63 Class A accidents and 59 Army fatalities. On-duty accidents accounted for 41 of the 63 Class A accidents and 39 of the 59 fatalities. Off-duty accidents accounted for 22 Class A accidents and 20 fatalities.

### **On-Duty Class A Accidents**

Of the 41 Class A on-duty PI accidents, 18 involved weapons handling and 10 involved PT activities. The 18 weapons handling accidents resulted in 17 Army fatalities and one non-Army fatality. Accidental discharges were the biggest problem, causing nine fatalities, while friendly fire accounted for four. Six of the PT fatalities occurred while Soldiers were running or immediately afterward, and three Soldiers died during PT testing. Twenty-four (59 percent) of the on-duty Class A PI accidents (including all but three of the weapons handling accidents) occurred in-theater during the buildup for and actual conduct of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

### **Off-Duty Class A Accidents**

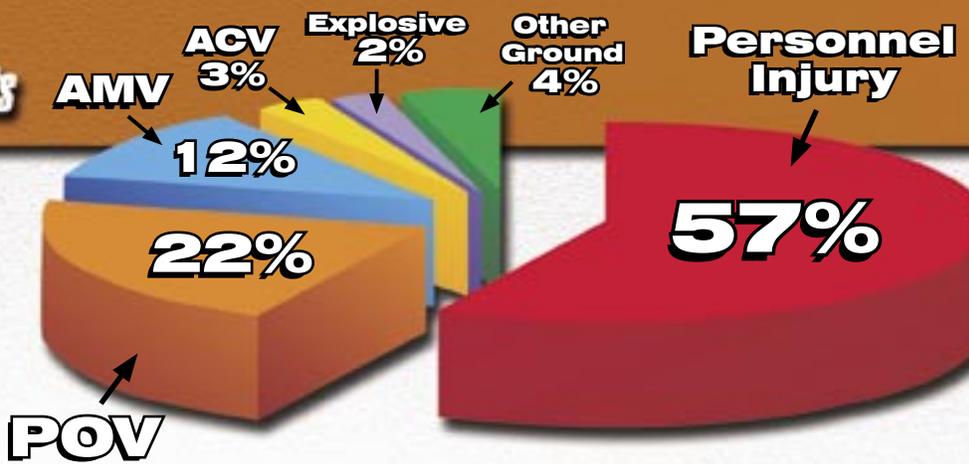
Of the 20 off-duty Army fatalities, 11 involved sporting activities. Five of these fatalities happened while the individual was mountain climbing or hiking, and five involved water sports such as diving, fishing, operating a personal watercraft, canoeing, and swimming.

### **Army Motor Vehicle (AMV)**

There were 183 Class A through C AMV accidents in FY03, up 18 percent from the same period during FY02. Tactical vehicles were involved in 68 percent of these accidents, with the most frequently involved vehicle—the HMMWV—accounting for 34 percent. Government sedans/station wagons accounted for 12 percent of these accidents, making them the most frequently involved commercial vehicles.

Although there was an increase in Class A through C AMV accidents, there was an even larger increase in Class A accidents and fatalities. During the same time in FY02, the Army had 19 Class A AMV accidents and lost 16 Soldiers. In FY03 there were 41 Class A accidents, with 33 Soldiers killed. Tactical vehicles accounted for 31 of the fatalities, with 20 involving the HMMWV. Commercial vehicles accounted for two of the fatalities, with over-2-ton commercial trucks and sedans/station wagons accounting for one each. Most (73 percent) of the Class A accidents occurred in theater during the buildup or actual conduct of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This included all but 3 of the 20 HMMWV Class A accidents, 7 of which

## FY 03 Class A-C Army Ground Accidents



happened during convoys. At least six of the in-theater HMMWV accidents were rollovers.

### Army Combat Vehicle (ACV)

There were 45 Class A through C ACV accidents in FY03, one more than during the same time last fiscal year. The majority of these accidents—33 percent—involved the M1 Abrams tank, while 29 percent involved fighting vehicles. Comparing the accidents during the same periods in FY02 and FY03, Class A accidents jumped from 6 with 5 fatalities during FY02 to 21 accidents and 15 fatalities in FY03. M1 tanks and fighting vehicles accounted for 57 percent of these Class A accidents. Some 67 percent of Class A accidents occurred in theater during the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom or during the actual operation.

At least seven of the Class A ACV accidents involved vehicle fires. Of those, at least six occurred when vehicles encountered terrain obstacles and hazards, such as drop-offs, embankments, sink holes, and power lines.

### Fire

Although non-vehicular fires do not account for a large portion of the FY03 Class A through C accidents and fatalities, there was an increase from 3 in FY02 to 14 in FY03. Class A fire accidents went from zero in FY02 to four in FY03. There was only one fire-related fatality in FY03.

### Explosives

Although explosives accidents cause only a relatively small number of Class A through C accidents and fatalities, they can cause catastrophic losses. During FY03 there were 35 of these accidents, compared to 33 in FY02. In FY02 there were five Class A accidents, resulting in 10 fatalities, most of which occurred during three multiple-fatality accidents. In FY03 there were six Class A explosives accidents, resulting in six fatalities.

### Conclusion

Overall, there was a slight decrease in the number of Class A through C accidents in FY03 compared to FY02. However, there was an increase in the number of Class A accidents and Army fatalities. Those increases occurred in AMV, ACV, and PI accidents. As with previous years, POV accidents were the single largest cause of Army fatalities (48 percent), with PI in second place with 26 percent. Accounting for 22 percent of our accidents were AMVs and ACVs, while explosives accidents accounted for 3 percent.

It's important that Soldiers and leaders at every level act to reverse the increase in Class A accidents and fatalities. Every Soldier must take responsibility for his or her actions and manage risks both on and off duty. Doing things by the book is as critical during combat operations as it is during training. Leaders must be tactically and technically proficient and enforce standards. Command involvement at the appropriate level is the key. Commanders must emphasize risk management and conducting operations by the book.

Leaders must remember they set the example for their troops, and Soldiers must remember that they set the example for their peers. It's vital that the example be a good one.

*\*Personnel injury accidents are Army accidents that involve injury to personnel not covered by any other accident type.*

*Editor's Note: These statistics are current from the Army Safety Center database as of 20 October 2003. Delayed reports and follow-up details on preliminary reports could change the statistics, figures, and findings somewhat in the coming months.*

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# Only You Can Prevent Holiday Fires!

**2LT HEATHER GROSS**  
Fort Rucker, AL

**A**s winter temperatures fall, the risk for fires goes up and brings a new set of hazards you need to be aware of. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, fires cause some 2,000 injuries and over \$500 million in damage each holiday season.

To prevent a fire, you need to understand how one is created. Fire requires three components—oxygen, fuel, and a heat source. Simply eliminating any one of these will prevent a fire. However, since oxygen exists naturally in the atmosphere, you need to concentrate on keeping fuel and heat sources apart. Heat can be produced by heaters, lights, appliances, or fire itself. Fuel is anything that will burn, including drapery, trash, dry wood, and even wires.

If you use a fireplace for heat, have your chimney inspected and cleaned by a professional to remove any creosote—the dark brown or black flammable tar that builds up inside the chimney. Using a metal mesh fireplace screen will keep burning embers from flying out. When using artificial logs, follow the instructions closely and never burn trash, to include wrapping paper, in your fireplace.

Know the layout of your home. If you have a window above a heater, make sure the drapes don't touch it. When using a space heater, keep 3 feet between the heater and everything around it, including furniture. Space heaters can be effective, but be careful and follow the manufacturers' instructions.

Christmas trees are another holiday fire hazard. Pick a fresh, green tree that has needles that don't break easily and, if bounced on the ground, few needles fall off. To keep your tree fresh, keep it away from heat and make sure the stand is full of water. If you select an artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant and keep it away from heaters.

Test your holiday lights, whether they are old or new, before you use them. Check each strand

to make sure the wires aren't frayed and the insulation is in good condition. Replace any lights that are missing or inoperable. As a rule of thumb, don't link more than three strands together unless the manufacturer says it is safe to do so. Never leave your lights on unattended, and periodically check the wires—they should not be warm to the touch. Be careful not to overload electrical sockets (this rule holds true throughout the entire year!). Avoid using candles, but if you do, be very careful. Ensure they can't be tipped easily and never put them on a tree or leave your house while they're burning.

These tips are a starting point to help you be safe during the holiday season. However, fire prevention needs to be practiced year-round to be effective. Here are some suggested additions to your New Year's Resolutions:

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on each floor of your home and located outside each sleeping area.
- Test the batteries in your smoke alarms each month, and change the batteries twice a year.
- Never leave the kitchen unattended when cooking, and avoid open flames when you're wearing loose clothing.
- Never overload electrical sockets.
- Plan and practice a fire escape plan with your family.
- Contact your local fire department concerning any special needs of family members and to have your fire escape plan reviewed.
- Most local or post fire departments will show you where to install smoke detectors in your home. Normally this is a free service.
- Keep a phone near your bed so you can call 911 in an emergency.
- Think about fire prevention every day! 

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# It Ain't No

Imagine a woman riding in a car on a warm, sunny afternoon. With her boyfriend driving, she is free to stretch out and relax like a cat sunning herself next to a window. Reclining her seatback and resting her feet on the dash, she closes her eyes and then drifts off to sleep, lulled into never-never land by the soothing voice and mellow music coming from the radio.

The driver watches the broken line dividing the lanes. Like yellow dashes, they slip beneath the car's left front fender, only to be spit out behind and disappear into infinity in the rearview mirror. The steady drone of the tires creates a hum, just barely audible beneath the radio music.

The miles slip behind almost effortlessly. It's been a long drive, especially since the Southwest scenery consists mostly of mile markers, sagebrush, and cactus. With just an hour to go, the driver reaches for his cell phone to call some friends. As he does, he looks into his rearview mirror and sees a red Chevy S-10 eating up his back bumper. Suddenly, the Chevy whips into the left lane, passes him, and then pulls back in front of him, almost cutting him off.

"What the ...?" the driver thinks. Then he looks into the rearview mirror and sees the reason.

# bob FOOTREST!

**BOB VAN ELSBERG**  
Managing Editor

A yellow Ryder truck flies up on his back bumper so close he can see the bugs splattered on the grill. Startled by being sandwiched between two dangerous drivers, he drops his cell phone, which bounces off the center console and lands near the brake pedal. Feeling around with his left foot, he nudges the phone back along the floorboard until he can reach down and get it. Glancing ahead, he sees the Chevy still there, just a few feet ahead. Apparently the driver is waiting for the Ryder truck to pass and go on down the road.

As our driver reaches down for the cell phone, he momentarily glances toward the floor. At that instant, the Chevy's left-rear tire blows out. The S-10 fishtails as gray smoke trails from the blown tire. The Chevy's driver, now panicking, hits his brakes, hoping that slowing down will keep him from losing control.

Our driver straightens up and looks forward again just as the front of his car slams into the back of the S-10. The driver and passenger airbags erupt so quickly and forcefully that it startles him. He hears his girlfriend scream. Although shaken, he keeps the car under control and steers onto the right shoulder.

He looks over at his girlfriend, who is still screaming. The passenger-side airbag did exactly what it was supposed to. At the moment of impact it erupted upward toward the inside of the windshield and backward toward her. Unfortunately, she'd been resting her feet on the dash when the airbag deployed. Coming out at approximately 200 mph, the airbag blew her feet and lower legs into the windshield, shattering several bones.

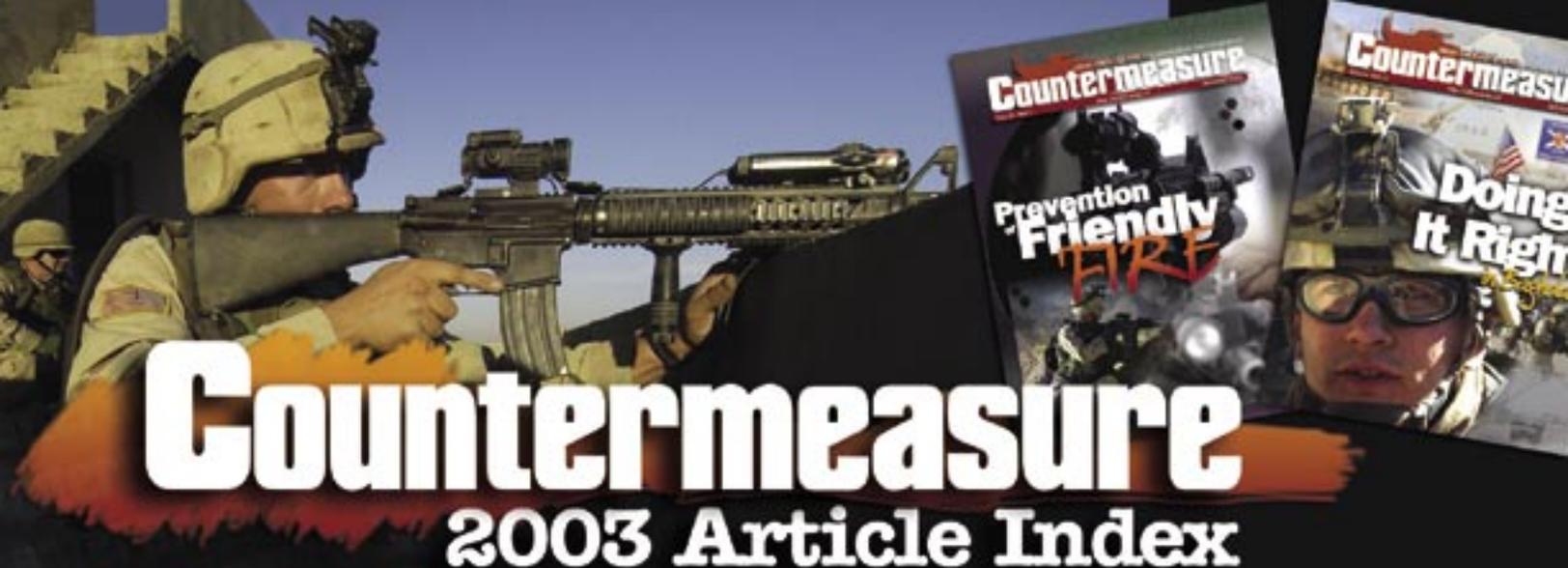
If you think this story is pure fiction, it isn't. A similar accident happened to a sailor in 2000, and it took several surgeries to correct his injuries. You'd think people would be able to see the obvious dangers in this. Yet, how often do you see someone riding in a vehicle with their feet resting

on the dash? I've even seen drivers with one foot hanging out the window and the other on the dash (they must have cruise control). If they were to have an accident, the airbag erupting from the steering wheel would give a whole new meaning to "doing the splits."

Airbags are designed to work with your seatbelts in protecting you during a crash. However, that assumes you're sitting in the proper position. Using your dash as a footrest might look "cool" or even be comfortable, but if you get in an accident and have airbags, it could be crippling. 🚗

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# Countermeasure

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## **"I Am Still Here"**

*Countermeasure*, July 2003

**Editor's Note:** *The motorcycle helmet survival article "I Am Still Here" was published in the July 2003 Countermeasure. Readers are still continuing to share their thoughts, observations, and personal experiences as they reflect on this story. If you have a personal experience where a helmet or a seatbelt saved your life, please take a few moments to write down what happened and e-mail it to countermeasure@safetycenter.army.mil.*

I read this story in the light of a recent tragedy. A player on my son's soccer team went skateboarding on the evening of 27 September without a helmet. He fell off his skateboard—nobody knows the details—and then walked home. His parents gave him ice for the injured area, but about a half hour later he still didn't feel well. His parents took him to the hospital, but he died 3 days later from his head injury. He was only 11.

I'm 55 and indulge in rollerblading. I wear not only a helmet, but also pads on my wrists, elbows, and knees. The human body is too delicate to rollerblade or skateboard unprotected.

**Gary Kazin**  
Picatinny Arsenal, NJ

As of 4 September this year, helmets are no longer required by law in Pennsylvania. I thought I would try going "helmet-less" because I thought the freedom would be great. Then I thought about the risks involved and decided to wear my helmet. I'm glad I ran this thought process back through my rusty brain.

I was riding my motorcycle early in the morning on 24 September. I reached a stop sign, looked both ways, and proceeded to make a right turn. About halfway through the turn, my front tire hit a wet spot (possibly oil), and my motorcycle and I parted company. Despite more than 30

years of riding experience, there was absolutely nothing I could do to keep from going down. When my body hit the asphalt, my head hit rather hard. My elbow bruised my ribs and I had a few scrapes on my knee, but I was all right. However, I might not be writing this if I hadn't had my helmet on.

Remember, it doesn't matter how careful you ride or how experienced you are on a motorcycle—an accident can happen to you. Because I was wearing my helmet and a leather jacket, my injuries were minimized in this situation.

Don't take needless risks. Wear your helmet and protective clothing, such as good-quality leather, to protect you against serious injuries. Although Pennsylvania might allow me the freedom to choose not to wear a helmet, I choose to live.

**CW2 David H. Goddard**  
Fort Indiantown Gap, PA

## **"Family of Space Heaters—Emphasis on Safety"**

*Countermeasure*, October 2003

In the October 2003 *Countermeasure* we published an article titled "Family of Space Heaters—Emphasis on Safety." Mr. Christopher Carroll of the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM) contacted us to advise that USACHPPM has published a new fact sheet on space heater use. The fact sheet is titled "Guidance on the Use of Heaters Inside Tents and Other Enclosed Shelters" and can be found on the USACHPPM Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/documents/FACT/55-007-1003.pdf>.

**The Editor**



## ACV

### Class A

- Civilian reporter died after being fired upon by a tank crew on a patrol mission.



## AMV

### Class A

- Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the HMMWV he was driving was hit by a civilian truck. The HMMWV was traveling with a convoy at the time of the accident.

- Soldier died after his HMMWV ran off the roadway and into a canal. The HMMWV was part of a two-vehicle convoy on a reconnaissance mission at the time of the accident.

- Soldier was killed when the Palletized Load System (PLS) he was riding in rear-ended the PLS in front of it during a convoy movement. No other Soldiers were injured.

- Soldier suffered fatal injuries when the HMMWV he was riding in ran off the roadway and overturned. The HMMWV's driver, who was not injured, was attempting to pass another vehicle and swerved to avoid an oncoming vehicle, causing the accident. The deceased Soldier was sitting in the turret seat.

- Soldier died when the HMMWV he was riding in overturned during a convoy escort mission. The deceased Soldier was manning the HMMWV's gun turret when it rolled. The vehicle's driver was hospitalized for injuries suffered in the accident.

### Class A (Damage)

- Two HMMWV TOW missile carriers were destroyed by fire. The fire started in one of the vehicles and spread to the other, causing the damage.



## Personnel Injury

### Class A

- Soldier died while hiking in a mountain range. The Soldier's body was found after he failed to return to duty. No other details were provided.

- Soldier suffered fatal injuries when his weapon discharged accidentally. The Soldier was returning to his living quarters after guard duty when the weapon discharged, striking him in the chest and shoulder.

- Soldier drowned after he jumped into a river to wash off after a haircut. The Soldier's body was found the next day.

- Soldier was killed while trying to put out a fire at an indoor small-arms range. The Soldier's unit was conducting weapons training at the range when a bullet ricocheted and ignited the fire.

- Cadet suffered a heat stroke and died during PT. The cadet, who had been running, was found after collapsing in front of an on-post barracks.

- Soldier was pronounced brain dead after collapsing during rifle bayonet training. No other details were provided.

- Soldier suffered a fatal gunshot wound during a night infiltration live-fire exercise.

The Soldier who fired the weapon was not injured.

- Soldier died after suffering a heat injury while riding in a convoy. No other details were provided.

- Soldier was killed after he fell 20 feet from the top of a building. The Soldier was on guard duty at the time of the accident.

- Soldier suffered a fatal gunshot wound when a 50-caliber machine gun fired as it was being loaded onto a HMMWV following live-fire training.

### Class B

- Parts of Soldier's thumb and middle finger were amputated when a breaching charge fell and detonated during MOUT training.

- Three Soldiers suffered first- and second-degree burns when their HMMWV caught fire and started a secondary explosion. The Soldiers were part of an EOD team and were preparing demolitions to destroy confiscated munitions at the time of the accident.

- Soldier's foot was shattered, resulting in a permanent partial disability, after he fell from a rooftop in a lodging compound. The Soldier reportedly was raising a flag atop the compound at the time of the accident.

- Soldier lost one eye when the star cluster he was returning to a storage room ignited.

# Coming Soon to a Post Near You!

Check here to find out when the U.S. Army Safety Center Mobile Training Team will present the Risk Management Course at your facility.

## Scheduled Visits

Location	Dates
Fort Rucker, AL	1-5 December
Fort Riley, KS	1-5 December
Fort Bragg, NC	26-30 January
Fort Sam Houston, TX	9-13 February
Ohio Army National Guard	21-22 February
Fort McPherson, GA	1-5 March
Fort Bliss, TX	8-12 March
Camp Zama, Japan	19-23 April
Okinawa, Japan	26-30 April
Fort Irwin, CA	9-13 February
Fort Sill, OK	2-6 February
Fort Drum, NY	23-27 February
Fort Lee, VA	23-27 February

## Open Visit Dates

(2004)
12-16 January
19-23 January
2-6 February
1-5 March
15-19 March
22-26 March
29 March-2 April
5-9 April
12-16 April
3-7 May
10-14 May
17-21 May
24-28 May

If you don't see your facility represented here, call your installation safety office and ask them to schedule a training visit. Visits are provided at no cost to your installation. For more information on the Risk Management Course or other safety courses, please contact:

**MSG Robert Spaulding**  
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**robert.spaulding@safetycenter.army.mil**

