

ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

# Countermeasure

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# Going Somewhere?



stay  
on the  
edge

# Going Somewhere?

OPERATIONS DIVISION  
G3, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center



**T**housands of Soldiers are either in or on their way to Iraq or Afghanistan—some for the second or third time. If you've been there before, you're familiar with the many different problems associated with living and fighting in the desert. If it's your first deployment, consider yourself fortunate that recent experience has provided numerous lessons learned so you don't have to figure things out the hard way.

You've already trained for the fight. It's just a matter of getting there

now. Highlighted in the paragraphs below are certain unsafe hazards that have caused accidents in the past, followed by control measures. Remember that safety, survival, knowledge, and common-sense thinking will lead to mission accomplishment and bring you home safe.

**Hazard:** Individuals abandon safety in an effort to establish "combat posture."

- Ensure all personnel know and use the 5-Step Risk Management Process and Composite Risk Management

in all operations.

- Establish a command climate from the outset that promotes safety. Begin by establishing a safety network and designating safety personnel.
- Train to standard, enforce standards, and require all personnel to perform to standard in all operations.
- Ensure leaders complete the Commanders' Safety Course.

**Hazard:** Unsafe loading and shipment. Examples of violations include failure to identify and mark containers, mixing Class A explosives with incompatible Class C ammunition, corrosives improperly certified and mixed with unidentified hazardous lubricants, MRE rations and undocumented insecticides on the same pallet, lack of MILSTAMP advanced cargo clearance, improper storage, and improper security.

- Train load teams to standard.
- Use Quality Assurance Specialist Ammunition Surveillance support.
- Nest all equipment and supplies inside vehicles to minimize damage from rough handling at ports and on the high seas.
- Comply with Air Force

Regulation 71-4 in airlift of hazardous materials and with guidelines in Technical Manual 38-250 (11 December 2001).

- Ensure vehicles have required tie-down shackles.
- Keep personnel from under equipment being lifted aboard ship.
- Coordinate and understand requirements for topping off vehicles before shipment.
- Coordinate port of embarkation shipping requirements for bulk fuel and petroleum, oil, and lubricants tank transporters through the servicing installation transportation office.
- Ensure that vehicle master switches are turned off immediately after loading.

**Hazard:** Chemical agent resistant coating (CARC) was used to repaint vehicles for deployment.

- Ensure CARC painting is completed in accordance with established requirements.
- Caution users that liquid CARC is flammable.
- Caution users that CARC is toxic and exposure to vapors or dust can lead to respiratory problems. It also can cause cancer.
- Ensure Soldiers wear proper personal protective equipment.

**Hazard:** Air travel caused

dehydration and fatigue.

- Encourage hydration before and during air travel with juices and water, not caffeine or coffee.
- Ensure arriving troops are given the opportunity to rehydrate and rest before being assigned duties.
- Once on the ground, ensure Soldiers have sunscreen, sunglasses, and dust goggles and that everyone knows where water is available.

**Hazard:** Lack of depth perception in the desert.

- Stress that lack of contrast in terrain features reduces depth perception.
- Ensure vehicle drivers follow proper ground-guide procedures.

**Hazard:** Soldiers are performing strenuous manual labor.

- In general, 2 weeks are required to adjust to the humidity and extreme heat (acclimatization).
- Remind Soldiers to avoid strains and lifting injuries by using proper lifting techniques (lift with the legs, not the back) and by getting help with heavy loads.

**Hazard:** Vehicle operations result in accidents.

- Ensure all primary and secondary drivers have the

opportunity to experience driving armored tactical vehicles before arriving in theater and beginning actual combat missions.

- Ensure drivers and vehicle commanders understand the responsibilities for safe vehicle operations (e.g., establishing and enforcing safe vehicle operations based on personnel, training, terrain, environment, and equipment). Army Regulation 600-55, chapter 1-4, outlines these responsibilities.

- Ensure drivers are trained and licensed on the vehicle they are operating (check Optional Form 346).

- Ensure drivers drive defensively.
- Remind drivers to clear all sides before turning.
- Remind drivers not to allow passengers to ride on the outside of any vehicle unless such action is command directed.
- Caution drivers to use extra care when operating off improved roads. Sand dunes drop off abruptly on the leeward side.
- Check loads to ensure cargo is secured correctly. Stress even load distribution, especially when traveling over sandy terrain.

- Train Soldiers on rollover procedures in accordance with Graphic Training Aid 55-

03-030 and practice rollover drills.

- Enforce seatbelt and Kevlar requirements.
- Establish and enforce safe convoy and catch-up speeds for expected road and environmental conditions and include in the pre-march briefing. Remind drivers that driving too fast for conditions is a primary cause of accidents.
- Train drivers in the correct use of ground guides and train all personnel in how to perform as ground guides. Remind drivers to always use two ground guides while backing.
- Recon routes for mountain passes or any sharp turn that might require special control measures, as well as bridges or underpasses that might be too low for large vehicles.
- Train all drivers in their vehicle's correct braking procedures.
- Train crews in vehicle fire drills and practice them.
- Caution drivers that roads, bridges, and overpasses might not be posted with weight or height restrictions.
- Require safety briefings for senior occupants and vehicle drivers.
- Require the use of 10-foot extension hoses and

tire cages for inflating and deflating split-rim tires.

**Hazard:** Not enough attention to weapons safety.

- Review fratricide prevention procedures.
- Remind Soldiers to handle all weapons as if they're loaded.
- Caution Soldiers not to play with knives.
- Don't allow target practice and blank ammunition to be mixed.
- Caution Soldiers not to burn ammunition boxes and to handle them with gloves.
- Execute drills on rules of engagement.

**Hazard:** Unsafe fuel handling and burning.

- Use Field Manual 21-10 for guidance on proper fuel mixtures.
- Ensure fuel isn't used as a substitute for cleaning solvents.
- Prohibit burning of aerosol cans and unopened MRE packages—they will explode.
- Train Soldiers in the process of burning human waste.

**Hazard:** Eye exposure to sunlight degrades night vision.

- Enforce wear of the Ballistic Laser Protection System (BLPS). The sunglasses

will reduce the adverse effects of sunlight on night vision. The sunglasses and clear lens also will help prevent eye injury.

- If BLPS aren't available, ensure Soldiers wear Wiley X sunglasses during the day to prevent night vision degradation.

For more information on general deployment safety, check out these Web sites:

- <https://crc.army.mil>
- <http://call.army.mil>
- <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/>
- <http://tri.army.mil>
- <http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/>
- [www.hqmc.usmc.mil/safety.nsf/](http://www.hqmc.usmc.mil/safety.nsf/) 

Comments regarding this article may be directed to the editor at (334) 255-1218, DSN 558-1218, or by e-mail at [julie.shelley@us.army.mil](mailto:julie.shelley@us.army.mil).

# Building Battlemind

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“**b**attlemind”  
is a  
Soldier’s  
inner

strength to face adversity, fear, and hardship during combat with confidence and resolution. It’s the will to persevere and win. Battlemind contributes to the Soldier’s will and spirit to fight and win in combat, thereby reducing combat stress reactions.

Soldiers are confronted with certain realities in combat operations that can’t be replicated in the training environment. Combat is sudden, intense, and life threatening. Their job is to kill the enemy. Innocent women and children often are killed in combat. No Soldier knows how they’ll perform in combat until the moment arrives. Although leaders can’t fully simulate these factors before deployment, they can prepare their Soldiers for the mental aspects of combat before they arrive in theater.

## **Fear in combat is common.**

More than two-thirds of Silver Star recipients reported increased fear as the battle progressed. Common symptoms of fear include violent shaking or trembling, loss of bladder control, weakness, cold sweats, and vomiting. Fear and anxiety are reduced in combat when Soldiers engage in actions used during training.

Leaders must drill and train their Soldiers in the specific actions to use in combat conditions—tough training is the best preparation. Soldiers must have sufficient physical and mental “reset” time. Admitting and joking about fear will release tension. Fear is NOT



a mental disorder; remember that even heroes feel fear.

## **Unit members will be injured and killed.**

More than 1,800 service members have been killed and almost 14,000 wounded since Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began. Studies have shown that Soldiers are angry when leaders fail to show they care regarding combat experiences, especially those involving injury or death.

To help, leaders must ensure their Soldiers don’t assume unnecessary risks on missions. Leader-led after-action reviews and mental health debriefings

from mental health professionals or chaplains can help relieve stress and anger. When a Soldier is killed, leaders should conduct memorial services with the utmost respect and dignity. Leaders also should talk to their Soldiers personally about critical incidents. They won’t care what their leaders know until they know their leaders care.

## **Combat impacts every Soldier mentally and emotionally.**

Combat stress reactions are both common and normal. Experiences such as nightmares, flashbacks, anger, and avoidance of expressing painful feelings might lead Soldiers to fear they

are “going crazy.” However, more than 90 percent of Soldiers who receive combat stress support are returned to duty. The intensity of reactions typically lessen within 60 to 90 days following redeployment, but it might take longer for a Soldier to recover fully.

One useful tool for leaders is buddy-aid mental health training. This process allows participants to assist other Soldiers in coping with the stress of combat. Following redeployment, leaders must watch their Soldiers and offer help to anyone struggling. Restoring mental fitness after combat sustains professional warrior discipline, toughness, strength, and proficiency. Leaders also must let their Soldiers know that combat stress reactions are normal responses to trauma.

**Soldiers are afraid to admit they have a mental health problem.**

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms are common after combat—10 to 20 percent of Soldiers report some symptoms after coming home. Combat stress often leads to excessive alcohol use and aggression. It’s important not to ignore these symptoms because earlier treatment leads to faster recovery. Admitting a mental health problem is not a character flaw.

Leaders can help by establishing a command climate where they acknowledge their Soldiers are under stress and might need help. In theater, collocating mental health assets with the battalion aid station or troop medical center might encourage more Soldiers to

seek help. A mental health outreach program also should be provided to each battalion. More information on PTSD can be found on the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Web site at <http://www.ncptsd.org/index.html>.

**Soldiers frequently perceive failures in leadership.**

Good leadership is linked to higher Soldier morale and cohesion, better combat performance, and fewer mental health problems. However, Soldiers have reported that leaders frequently engage in actions to enhance their own career and personal well-being—not that of their troops. Soldiers also have complained that leaders often fail to exhibit clear thinking and reasonable action under stress. Courage and valor, never personal gain, are the measures of Soldier and leader performance.

Leaders should allow subordinates to seek clarification of orders or policies without responding defensively or considering the Soldier disloyal. Leaders do have the right, however, to remove, reassign, or demote subordinates who fail to measure up after being given the means and opportunities to succeed.

**Breakdowns in communication are common.**

Soldiers have reported that deployment policies often are inconsistently applied. Soldiers also have complained that they frequently don’t know the status of wounded comrades and will resort to rumors if their leaders don’t tell them the facts.

Leaders must keep their

Soldiers informed. Saying “I don’t know” is better than not telling them anything. Command policies and views on all matters should be expressed clearly and made known throughout the ranks. Leaders also should let their Soldiers know the status of wounded evacuees and disseminate news of their and other units’ successes. Effective communication is a leadership responsibility.

**Deployments place a tremendous strain on families.**

Since OIF began in March 2003, nearly one-fifth of all Soldiers deployed to Iraq have reported marital concerns or problems. Soldiers have said their marital satisfaction declined after they deployed to OIF. They also generally are dissatisfied with their units’ family readiness group (FRG) and rear detachment.

Leaders shouldn’t allow family problems to go unanswered. It might help to assign at least one staff member to serve as an ombudsman or expediter of family problems. Deployed Soldiers also appreciate formal recognition of special family occasions such as births and graduations. Leaders also should address any reported problems with the FRG or rear detachment to ensure timely action.

**The combat environment is harsh and demanding.**

The combat environment and its heat, noise, and lack of privacy takes a toll on Soldiers. Sleep is a big issue in theater. Soldier performance progressively deteriorates with less than 8 hours of sleep daily. Soldiers also are extremely sensitive to perceived inequalities in the

distribution of Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) resources.

Leaders must ensure their Soldiers get adequate rest, hydration, and other force-protection measures. They must be aware of their Soldiers' physical condition and sleep patterns and insist that physical training is maintained during the deployment. Leaders also must insist on a fair distribution of MWR resources and prevent double standards among officers, NCOs, and junior enlisted Soldiers.

**Unit cohesion and team stability are disrupted by combat.**

Soldiers function best in combat with those they know. These bonds, however, will be disrupted by combat deaths, medical evacuations, emergency leave, and other factors. Changes in task organization and forward operating base locations also impact unit cohesion.

Leaders can lessen these impacts by maintaining unit integrity to the greatest extent possible. Units, not individual Soldiers, should be rotated during combat. Conducting team-building exercises throughout the deployment also might help. Finally, all new Soldiers should be welcomed and integrated into the unit immediately.

**Combat poses moral and ethical challenges.**

Combat exposes the reality of death—something many Soldiers will be exposed to for the first time. These situations test the character of both leaders and Soldiers. Every Soldier needs to come home with a war story he can live with.

Leaders should reward and recognize their Soldiers on a regular basis for their personal sacrifices and tell them when they've done a good job.

Harassment and mistreatment of Soldiers should never be allowed. Leaders also must discuss the moral implications of each Soldier's behavior in combat and how individual sacrifice contributes to America's enduring fight for freedom.

**Conclusion**

Combat isn't easy on any Soldier. Leaders must keep their Soldiers ready—both physically and mentally—for this fight and future conflicts. Use the resources available and make sure your Soldiers are prepared for what they'll face in theater and back home.

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# Does Your Helmet Fit?

**R**ecent surveys conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan show that as many as half the Soldiers serving there are not properly wearing the Personnel Armor System, Ground Troops (PASGT) helmet or the Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH). Soldiers whose helmets are fitted poorly or worn improperly face an increased risk of injury or death from ballistic threats and other head injuries. In response to this alarming finding, the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive Command issued Safety of Use Message 05-006 outlining proper wear and fit of these two helmets.

## PASGT Proper Wear & Adjustment

GTA 07-05-001

- If the PASGT is too tight or loose:**
- Adjust headband in small increments.
  - Retention headband on the soft strap.
  - Adjust headband clip in and out (both eyes).
  - Try different shell size.

- If the PASGT is too high:**
- Adjust chin strap and ear covering.
  - Adjust headband clip toward helmet crown.
  - Try next larger shell size.

- If the PASGT is too low:**
- Adjust chin strap (keeping clip toward ear).
  - Try next smaller shell size.

- Facemask helmet pod/covers:**
- Retention strap front and side face mask.
  - Check pads for tears and compressibility.

**References:**  
 PASGT: Natick PAM 70-2  
 ACH: TM 10-8470-204-10  
<http://www.peosoldier.army.mil>

**Prepared:** U.S. Army Infantry School  
 Fort Benning, GA  
 1 June 2005



**WARNING!** Risk of serious injury or death is greater with improper helmet wear.

The PASGT helmet should be fitted in accordance with the instructions in Natick PAM 70-2 by measuring head length, width, and circumference. A properly fitted PASGT helmet should have a minimum 1/2-inch space between the head and the helmet. A properly sized and fitted helmet will sit level on the Soldier's head, with the lower edge of the front rim being set at the top of the eyebrow and level to the ground or slightly inclined with respect to the ground. When tightened, the chin strap will be centered with equal distances on each side between the chin cup and mounting location on the helmet. The bottom of the PASGT should come to the bottom of the Soldier's ear.

## ACH Proper Wear & Adjustment

GTA 07-05-001

A Soldier's ACH size might not be the same as their previously issued PASGT helmet. For example, the front rim of the ACH rests about 1/2-inch higher than the PASGT. The ACH should be fitted in accordance with the instructions in Technical Manual (TM) 10-8470-204-10 by measuring head length, width, and circumference.

The ACH should fit so the front rim is approximately 1/2-inch above the eyebrows. A properly sized and fitted ACH will sit level on the Soldier's head. While looking upward by only moving his eyes, the wearer should be able to just see the rim's edge. All ACHs should be fitted with the thinner size 6 crown pad, which should touch the top of the wearer's head. Helmet fit can be modified by adjusting the pad positions, tightening the retention straps, or exchanging the helmet shell for a larger size. The bottom of the ACH should rest at the top of the Soldier's ear canal opening.

- If the ACH is too tight:**
- Rearrange side pads in a vertical, diagonal, or horizontal configuration.
  - Remove front or back pads and rearrange side pads.
  - Create space in the area that feels tight.
  - Try next smaller pad size.
  - Try next larger shell size.

- If the ACH is too loose or unstable:**
- Rearrange side pads in a vertical, diagonal, or horizontal configuration.
  - Tighten chin strap retention system.
  - Increase number of pads.
  - Try next larger pad size.
  - Try next smaller shell size.

- If the ACH is too high:**
- Judge at brow and ear. Soldier should see rim of helmet when looking up.
  - Portion of ear globe and canal is covered.
  - Try next smaller sized pad set.
  - Try next larger shell size.

- If the ACH is too low:**
- Try next larger sized pad set.
  - Try next smaller shell size.



**WARNING!** Risk of serious injury or death is greater with improper helmet wear.

### Other information

Keep in mind that both helmets should be adjusted accordingly when other items such as headsets, cold weather caps, or nuclear, biological, and chemical masks are worn. The complete text of the technical references above, as well as visual examples and videos of proper fit and wear procedures, can be found online at <https://www.peosoldier.army.mil>.

Comments regarding this article may be directed to the editor at (334) 255-1218, DSN 558-1218, or by e-mail at [julie.shelley@us.army.mil](mailto:julie.shelley@us.army.mil).

# Got Sleep?

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**S**leep—like food, water, and air—is a necessity, not a luxury. In the combat environment, however, sleep is taken for granted all too often. When you don't get enough sleep, performance suffers and everyone is put at risk.

The effects of sleep deprivation sneak up on you. When you don't get enough sleep, your judgment is affected in many ways. You can't really gauge the impact those sleepless days and nights have on your abilities or the decrease in your performance. The following scenarios illustrate just a few examples of accidents that can result from sleep deprivation:

- Drivers falling asleep at the wheel, causing vehicle accidents and rollovers
- Medical personnel administering the wrong type or wrong dose of medicine
- Soldiers failing to recognize or reacting too slowly to a threat
- Soldiers transposing digits while entering coordinates into a fire control system

A sleep-deprived Soldier can make bad tactical decisions. The bottom line is that sleep deprivation can get you and your buddies killed!

## **Sleep deprivation and performance**

The longer you go without sleep, the poorer your performance on any number of tasks. Your performance begins to suffer as soon as you start

losing sleep. If you're struggling to stay awake, your ability to function is already impaired.

In general, you can sustain normal performance without noticeable impairment for about 16 hours after you wake up. After 16 hours, however, you suffer a noticeable decrease in performance. If you're consistently awake for 24 hours, your reaction time is worse than if you were legally intoxicated. After 28 hours without sleep your performance is significantly impaired, and the likelihood of you making a critical error rises to an unacceptable level.

## **Sleep management**

To sustain performance over the long haul you need at least 6, and preferably 7 to 8, hours of



sleep out of every 24 hours. Your performance will degrade over time with less than 6 hours of sleep. Getting 4 to 6 hours of sleep every 24 hours will keep you in the “amber zone,” where the risk for mission-critical errors is increased but still at acceptable levels, for several weeks. You’ll be in the “red zone,” where the risk for mission-critical errors is unacceptably high, if you get less than 4 hours of sleep.

Keep in mind that sleep doesn’t have to be continuous. Although uninterrupted sleep time is preferred, several shorter sleep periods that add up to 6 to 8 hours likely will be sufficient.

### Tips for sleep management

#### Tips for Soldiers

- Don’t sleep in areas with regular activity or in or under any vehicle.
- When sleeping, minimize exposure to noise and light by wearing earplugs

and blackout shades.

- Avoid over-the-counter “sleep aids,” which cause grogginess, not actual sleep.
- Sleep whenever possible; even a little sleep is better than none. Several “catnaps” can add up quickly.

#### Tips for leaders

- Develop a unit sleep management program that allows your Soldiers at least 6, and preferably 7 to 8, hours of sleep every 24 hours.
- Soldiers trying to sleep during the day require longer or more frequent opportunities to sleep. These extended periods compensate for the body’s normal reaction to sleep cycle disruption.
- Never put your Soldiers in a position where they must choose between sleep and something else they’d enjoy.
- Arrange sleep schedules so your Soldiers can sleep at consistent times.

### Caffeine

If sleep loss can’t be avoided, use caffeine. Drink the equivalent of two cups of coffee (about 200 mg of caffeine) every 2 to 4 hours. This amount will help you maintain your performance even in periods of moderate sleep loss. Keep in mind, however, that caffeine is a temporary solution to the problem and too much can make you jittery.

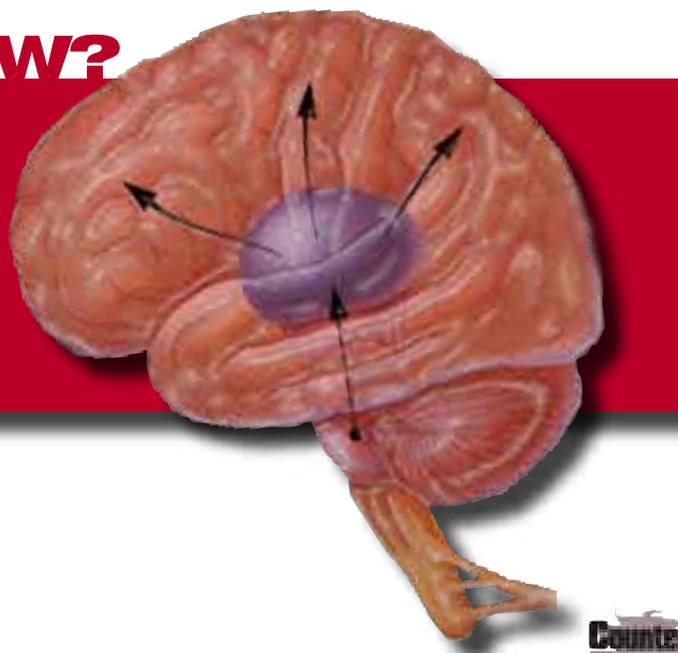
You must have adequate sleep to execute your missions accurately and safely. Too many sleepless days and nights and you’ll accumulate a sleep debt that must be paid. Now go get some rest!

*Editor’s note: This article originally appeared in the May-June 2005 issue of Infantry and was adapted for use in Countermeasure.*

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Your brain creates dreams through random electrical activity. About every 90 minutes your brain stem sends electrical impulses throughout your brain in no particular order or fashion. The analytic portion of your brain—the forebrain—desperately tries to make sense of these signals. This haphazard activity is why your dreams seem so disjointed.



# A Cure for Negligent Discharges?

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**T**he combat environment leads to human error, whether the primary factor is fatigue, preoccupation with something other than the mission, or a simple failure to stay alert. Every day Soldiers are placed in a multitude of situations that require attention to detail to make sure their fellow Soldiers aren't injured, maimed, or killed. Efforts to eliminate factors that hurt Soldiers are vital links in the chain of accident prevention.

Soldiers gearing up for a combat deployment must handle their weapons on a daily basis, and those weapons never leave their side when they get to theater. Yet many of these Soldiers are ill-equipped to make the transition to 24-hour warfighter. The rash of negligent discharge incidents since the beginning of the War on Terror illustrates the importance of constant weapons status awareness. Most of the accidental discharges in theater to date have occurred in tents or in the dining facilities at forward operating bases.

All Soldiers, whether they're training on a range or performing a combat mission in theater, must be conscious in preventing negligent discharges. However, Soldiers must

also be provided the proper tools to make this task more realistic. The Indicator, Safety Rifle (NSN 1005-00-418-8557) is currently available through the Army supply system. This simple piece of plastic can differentiate between a "safe"



weapon and a deadly one.

The Indicator, Safety Rifle (which is compatible with all M-16 and M-249 weapons) is inserted into a weapon's chamber any time the weapon status is green or amber. The indicator keeps the bolt away from the breech and protrudes out the gun's side at the dust cover. Therefore, it's impossible for a round to be in the chamber with the indicator installed. Any Soldier can tell the weapon is safe just by glancing at it. The indicator should be installed when Soldiers enter any area where the weapons status is not red.

Many Soldiers deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan aren't used

to carrying ammunition, but it's a reality in combat. In fact, many Soldiers involved in negligent discharge incidents have said they simply weren't used to carrying ammunition. In addition to using the Indicator, Safety Rifle, it's

also recommended that Soldiers at the pre-mobilization site carry a blank clip in their weapons. This exercise will get Soldiers in the habit of dropping the clip before they pull the charging handle back.

Negligent discharges don't have to happen. Training and the right equipment can save Soldiers' lives and preserve combat readiness. Call your supply chain today to procure this valuable piece of equipment!

Editor's note: While there is no "magic bullet" to cure negligent discharges, individual Soldiers can help prevent

such accidents by following the proper clearing procedures for their type weapon. Check out the "Weapons Handling Procedures" guide on the Combat Readiness Center's Web site at [https://crc.army.mil/MediaAndPubs/magazines/countermeasure/2004\\_issues/safeweaponpullout.pdf](https://crc.army.mil/MediaAndPubs/magazines/countermeasure/2004_issues/safeweaponpullout.pdf), which outlines correct clearing procedures for currently issued individual weapons. The guide also is available in hard copy in the July 2004 Countermeasure. 

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# Leave It There!

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**O**f the 42nd Infantry Division liaison cell in Camp Doha, Kuwait. Every day I see Soldiers attempting to bring illegal and dangerous souvenirs home from Iraq. This article takes a humorous look at these “mementos” of wartime service, but I hope you’ll see this is a serious subject.

So, you’re about to leave the combat zone for home. Your tour is over, and you want a souvenir of your time in the desert. But maybe you’re not sure what constitutes an “appropriate” memento from Operation Enduring or Iraqi Freedom. That’s why I’m here—to help you decide!

Part of my job is to brief Soldiers on what they can and can’t bring back from Southwest Asia. I’ll share these tips with you now. First, your keepsake must be tasteful, safe, and legal. The military customs inspector at your redeployment camp determines what’s safe and legal; your spouse back home has the final say on taste. While shopping for souvenirs, think about what your wife or husband will say (or scream). That life-sized brass camel statue that looked so attractive in the bazaar will get through customs but most likely won’t pass inspection with the “Household 06.” If you can imagine your spouse exclaiming, “There’s no way you’re bringing that thing into my house,” you might want to reconsider your selection.

All kidding aside, there are some “trophies” you simply cannot bring back to the U.S.

These banned items might seem obvious to anyone blessed with common sense, but as we all know, common sense really isn't that common. That's why friendly customs inspectors search your stuff before you go home. To make their jobs easier and speed up your return home, here's a partial list of contraband that can't be brought back from overseas.

**Sand.** Southwest Asia currently is experiencing a critical shortage of sand—not even one grain can be spared! Besides, there's a real threat that the spirit of an ancient warrior king, like the one in "The Mummy" movies, lives in the sand and will hurt you bad. The king's spirit isn't the only thing living in the sand that can hurt you either. Just imagine all those microorganisms that aren't organic to U.S. soil. Trust me, there's already plenty of dirt in your backyard.

**Weapons.** A select-fire assault rifle is an excellent and even necessary item to have in the combat zone, but not so much back home. Your neighbors might be impressed with your new AK-47, but local law enforcement authorities likely will be even more impressed. They'll probably want to talk to you about how you got such

a powerful weapon—maybe even through a bullhorn!

**Ammunition, explosives, and unexploded ordnance (UXO).** Of all the things that can be used as a paperweight, the hand grenade is a poor choice. It'll roll all over your desk and maybe even detonate without notice. The term "dud" is commonly used to identify UXO but also applies to anyone challenged enough to play around with such stuff. Just because an explosive hasn't gone off doesn't mean it won't. It's easy—keep your hands to yourself and keep your hands! But don't worry if you "accidentally" pack something you shouldn't. The big bomb-sniffing dogs at the customs inspection will find it.

**Cuban cigars.** Anything that tastes this good has to be either illegal or bad for you. Cuban cigars are both. Enjoy your Havanas in Iraq, because at customs you'll encounter a squadron of talking parrots specially trained to sniff out Communist tobacco.

**Pets.** The list of prohibited pets includes grasshoppers, lizards, camel spiders, scorpions, snakes,

and anything else that can make you say "ouch!" Whether they're dead or alive, squished, stuffed, or encased in plastic, there's no earthly reason why you need a sand viper. And admit it—the whole time you were deployed, all you thought about was home. The desert is their home. If you bring a pet back to the U.S., it'll spend the rest of its life missing home. Is that what you really want?

Hopefully these hints will help you find the perfect—yet safe, appropriate, and tasteful—souvenir that'll pass a customs search with flying colors. Selecting the right memento will lead to years of pleasant memories, something you'll cherish long after the sand flea bites heal. 

*Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the August 2005 The Combat Edge, the U.S. Air Force's Air Combat Command safety publication. It was adapted for use in Countermeasure.*

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Camel spiders live in arid regions all over the world—even the southwestern United States, where there are more than 50 species! These creatures are arachnids, like spiders and scorpions, but they're scientifically classified as solpugids. Camel spiders have gained a lot of notoriety since the beginning

of Operation Iraqi Freedom, when various e-mailed photographs and horror stories began circulating around the Internet. Camel spiders aren't venomous, but they're extremely aggressive and pack a mean bite. They rarely attack humans but, if you see one, don't play with it—and don't bring one home!



# Going Home

**CW3 RANDY MCCORMICK**  
B Co., 1-106 Aviation Regiment  
Illinois Army National Guard

**t**housands of Soldiers are deploying to the Middle East, and the duration of these deployments most likely will stay at a year or longer. Being away from the people you love for such a long time can create issues that won't be fully apparent until you return home. Although these strains might be evident during R&R leave, they usually won't be fully obvious until you're redeployed. Your relationship with your spouse and children probably will be most affected, but you also might experience difficulty with other social relationships.

The primary factor to consider on your return is the pre-deployment status of your relationship. If the relationship wasn't good before the deployment, it most likely won't have improved any when you get back. Don't think you can simply start over when you redeploy.

Your relationship with your children probably will be most affected. The extent of change depends on several variables, and each child's age is the best determining factor for reintegration. Babies typically are least impacted and the quickest

to recover, although many don't recognize the deployed parent. Teenagers typically don't show their true feelings about the returning parent, and it isn't easy to determine the deployment's effects on younger adolescents. Don't try to force yourself back into their lives; instead, give them time and space to adjust.

Slowly work your way back into your pre-deployment parenting role. Taking an extended vacation with your family is a good idea, but delay leaving for a week or two. Your role in the family will become more stable during



these extra days, ensuring a more enjoyable time for everyone when you do get away.

Your spouse essentially has been a single parent during your deployment. They managed everything from household chores to finances while you were away and might be reluctant to give up control on many issues. You must work with your spouse to determine your new role, but make sure you let them know how you feel.

Counseling might be required to resolve these types of issues, and options are available through several different channels. Your chaplain or family readiness group will have information to get you started. Don't be embarrassed about seeking counseling. Some people need a springboard for their thoughts or just an outside observer to put things in perspective. Don't wait to request help, because by then it might be too late to save the relationship.

Your sexual relationship with your spouse might be strained at first. Your partner might feel abandoned; remember they've

## NEED HELP?

Adjusting to life back home after a lengthy, intense deployment might prove difficult for many Soldiers and their loved ones. To find out more about available redeployment resources, visit the Army OneSource Web site at [www.armyonesource.com](http://www.armyonesource.com) or call their toll-free number, (800) 464-8107.

been alone a long time. Time and rebuilding your base relationship will help alleviate some of these feelings. Seek counseling if things don't get better over time.

It will be easiest for you to re-establish relationships with your other family members and friends. These people will probably give you the biggest welcome home. Some Soldiers might feel the welcome is undeserved, however, if they were deployed in a combat support role and never saw direct fighting. Even if you feel you don't deserve the attention, try to remain positive. Your friends and relatives will want to celebrate that you've made it home safe. Throwing a welcome-home party will make them feel good after the time they've spent worrying.

If you're a Reserve Component

Soldier, remember you'll have to re-establish work relations with your civilian employer. Be honest when it comes to terminal leave and your return-to-work date. It's also important to know your rights before you go back to work. Your local Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve representative will see you through any problems.

Rebuilding your relationships will take time when you get back home. Realize you're not the only one having problems, and talk to other Soldiers in the same situation to see what's worked for them. Be prepared for these changes, but also be happy you're back with the people who matter most. 

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# Flash, Bang, Burn!

**CW4 ROBERT BERRA**  
Accident Investigator  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

**a** foreign national engineer element supporting coalition forces in theater was tasked to destroy various captured enemy ammunition (CEA). It was a hot August afternoon—temperatures peaked at around 115 °F. The ammunition included 18 SA-7 missiles, unfuzed 60 mm mortar rounds, 14.5 mm and .50 caliber ammunition, RKG-3M Soviet hand grenades, and propellant bags from artillery rounds.

These munitions had been stored in an open pit and exposed to direct sunlight for an undetermined amount of time. The engineers loaded the CEA into a HMMWV and drove to a demolition site, where they began to download the munitions by hand. They placed the CEA into a pile within 2 meters of the HMMWV.

The engineers didn't notice that an unpackaged bag of double-base propellant had torn open and spilled on and around the other munitions. Within minutes, the spilled propellant flashed and ignited the remaining CEA on the ground and in the HMMWV. Four engineers suffered various burn injuries, and the HMMWV was destroyed. The foreign engineers learned the hard way that double-base propellants ignite easily, have a high burn rate, and can self-ignite under high temperatures.

All CEA operations—including collection, transportation, and destruction—are inherently dangerous and pose a unique challenge for our forces. When



you conduct a CEA operation, you're accepting the risks involved. Commanders must use the risk management process and plan these type operations carefully to mitigate the hazards.

Only trained personnel should handle CEA; however, many of these munitions are being encountered in theater and the number of trained personnel is limited. Therefore, CEA operations often are being conducted by personnel who lack formalized training and certifications. To minimize the risk, take the following precautions:

- Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnance (UXO) are not classified as CEA. Don't touch or move a suspected IED or UXO. Immediately mark the site and report the location to Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel through your command channels.
- EOD personnel should be involved in both the planning and execution phases of CEA operations. EOD personnel can reduce the hazards of these operations by providing an initial assessment to determine the hazard level and by destroying

all items deemed unsafe for transportation or storage.

- Do not handle unpackaged munitions until a positive risk category is determined. Before this time, any assessment must be made without handling the munitions.
- Personnel trained in ammunition handling—such as certified Quality Assurance Specialists Ammunition Surveillance (QASAS) and Ammunition Specialists (MOS 89B)—can determine proper packaging, transportation, and storage requirements.
- Whenever possible, use the original shipping container for transportation and storage. Other safe-to-ship packaging includes empty ammunition boxes lined with sand and packing material to prevent forward and backward movement.
- Handle all ammunition and explosives carefully! Improper, rough, or careless handling can cause accidental detonation.
- Limit the number of personnel engaged in ammunition and explosives handling to the minimum required for safe and efficient operations.
- When transporting CEA,

block and brace packaged items so they can't move during transportation and always observe compatibility standards.

- Reference the following materials for more information on safe handling procedures:
    - ▶ Field Manual (FM) 21-16, *Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Procedures*, 30 August 1994
    - ▶ FM 4-30-13, *Ammunition Handbook*, 1 March 2001
    - ▶ Department of the Army Pamphlet 385-64, "Ammunition and Explosives Safety Standards," 15 December 1999
    - ▶ U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center pamphlet, "Munitions Handling 101"
    - ▶ Army Safety Policy Memorandum, 28 June 2004
- Leaders at all levels must understand the proper procedures to plan, execute, and react to CEA operations. Units must incorporate risk management into munitions handling operations to reduce the risks inherent with these missions. Do your part on the individual level and be safe! 

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# Is There Anyone Downrange?

**MSG ROBERT FISHER**  
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**W**hat happened This was the first field training exercise for a new unit of action. The fire team received live ammunition for a live-fire range exercise. After receiving the ammunition, the fire team walked to the range and began their training. The first sergeant was on the range and, after the first dry-fire iteration (with no opposing forces [OPFOR] personnel present), called the range safety officer (RSO) on his hand-held radio.

The first sergeant asked the RSO to send forward OPFOR personnel. The RSO immediately

sent two Soldiers to the range. Neither of these Soldiers had acted as OPFOR previously during this training. The OPFOR Soldiers (with blank ammunition) were positioned downrange in accordance with the company's training plan. The fire team was supposed to conduct two blank iterations with the OPFOR present.

After locking and loading their weapons with the live ammunition, the fire team moved onto the range. As they exited the wood line and began to proceed down the range, the team leader saw two pop-up targets and directed his Soldiers to react. The OPFOR Soldiers saw the fire team approaching but didn't fire their weapons.

As the fire team reacted to the targets, they separated into two buddy teams—one on the right and one on the left. The two Soldiers in the left buddy team bounded forward while the two Soldiers in right-side buddy team fired live ammunition at the two pop-up targets. At this point the OPFOR Soldiers were in the right-side buddy team's direct line of sight.

The right-side team then bounded forward while the left-side team engaged the near targets. Each buddy team bounded one more time in the same manner. After this second bounding movement, the buddy teams shifted their fires from the near targets to the far



targets. The buddy teams didn't move after the final bound.

A platoon leader acting as the left-side lane observer/controller (OC) asked the company commander if the OPFOR were off the range. The company commander called "cease fire." The buddy teams stopped firing even though they didn't know why the cease fire was called.

A platoon sergeant, who was acting as the right-side lane OC, had forgotten the OPFOR were on the range. He immediately started moving downrange to look for the OPFOR. While the platoon sergeant was moving down the range, the company commander saw one of the OPFOR Soldiers stand up, visibly shaken.

This OPFOR Soldier was 85 meters from the final bounding position and 20 meters left of the far target positions. He wasn't in either of the buddy team's direct line of sight. The company commander verified this OPFOR Soldier wasn't injured, but he soon saw the other OPFOR Soldier lying in a small tire rut.

The second OPFOR Soldier had suffered fatal injuries during the live-fire engagement.

The platoon sergeant didn't know where the OPFOR had been positioned during the training iteration. He found the OPFOR Soldiers and the company commander only after he ran around the final objective.

### **Why it happened**

Three failures were present and contributing in this accident:

- The range officer in charge (OIC) and the RSO failed to ensure the range was clear before the live-fire iterations began. Neither Soldier asked if anyone was downrange before the live-fire training began.
- The company commander and first sergeant failed to establish a clear delineation of responsibilities. The company commander and first sergeant said they were providing tactical oversight and weren't responsible for the OIC's and RSO's safety responsibilities. The company commander and first sergeant

### **Lessons learned**

- Range OICs and RSOs must clear personnel from all ranges and ensure the ranges are clear before beginning live-fire operations.
- Range OICs and RSOs must be trained in separating their responsibilities for tactical evaluations and safety.
- Battalion commanders must ensure subordinate company commanders and first sergeants know their roles and understand that all actions or changes must be coordinated with the OICs and RSOs.
- OPFOR must not be placed on any range where blank and live fires are being conducted simultaneously.
- Commanders must coach, teach, and mentor platoon leaders in troop-leading procedures, risk management, and back briefs.
- Range OICs must use range safety checklists when conducting a safety briefing. 

# UXO and Explosives

JULIE SHELLEY  
Editor

**T**his past February the Combat Readiness Center (CRC) developed a new tool for commanders called “preliminary loss reports” (PLRs), which are generated for each Class A Army accident involving a fatality. Every PLR contains the basic facts of the accident and suggested tactics, techniques, and procedures based on the information available and lessons learned from similar accidents. The PLRs are sent to brigade commanders and above and select command sergeants major to share lessons learned. Countermeasure will spotlight certain PLRs when a trend in ground tactical accidents emerges. This month’s “PLR Files” focuses on explosives accidents, which have killed three Soldiers since May 2005.

**Iraq:** A specialist died when a piece of UXO detonated in a tent. The Soldier was packing gear to move from one tent to another when he either handled or unintentionally disturbed the UXO. The origin of the explosive item is unknown.

**United States:** A private first class was killed when a grenade exploded in his hand. The Soldier was in active duty for training status and was part of an advance party for live-fire training on a range. The private and two other Soldiers were conducting a

reconnaissance mission when they reportedly broke away from their 12-man party and crossed into another range where they were not authorized to be. They were taking pictures and collecting dud rounds when the private picked up the grenade. He was killed instantly upon detonation.

After the accident, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel recovered multiple dud rounds, including 40 mm target practice rounds and 37 mm rounds, from the private’s pockets. There is a possibility that one to two 40 mm high-explosive dual-purpose rounds contributed to the Soldier’s injuries. The advance party reportedly was fully trained on restricted areas (which also were clearly posted as restricted) and on the safety policies prohibiting the handling of ordnance. The accident range was littered with a broad spectrum of ordnance, from small arms to aircraft gunnery (short of missiles).

**Afghanistan:** A captain suffered fatal injuries when an explosive charge he was handling detonated. The unit’s Soldiers were emplacing linear-shaped charges during “entry technique” training at the local range when the charge exploded unexpectedly. The captain presumably was handling one of the explosives. Two other Soldiers and a foreign national troop were injured, but all are expected to recover. Initial reports indicate the Soldiers were not wearing body armor.

Don’t let these type accidents happen in your formation. Consider the following actions to help prevent similar incidents:

- Ensure personnel wear appropriate personal protective equipment as listed in Training Circular 90-1, paragraph 4-8, when handling explosive charges.

- Do not touch or move a suspected UXO item. Leave that mission to EOD personnel.

- If you find a suspected UXO item, mark the area, report it to your higher headquarters, safeguard your personnel, and follow UXO procedures in accordance with Field Manual 21-16 and local procedures.

- Check out the CRC’s Web site at [https://crc.army.mil/guidance/best\\_practices/CFLCC\\_Safety\\_Gram\\_UXO.jpg](https://crc.army.mil/guidance/best_practices/CFLCC_Safety_Gram_UXO.jpg) for a poster download. Hang the poster where all personnel can see it.

- Download the “Munitions Handling During Deployed Operations 101” handbook from the CRC’s Web site at <https://crc.army.mil/Tools/handbooks/ground/munitionshandling.pdf> for additional information concerning UXO.

- Aggressively enforce UXO safety procedures.

To find the complete text of these and other PLRs, please visit the CRC Web site at <https://crc.army.mil> and click on the “Latest PLRs” box on the right side of the page. You must have an AKO password to access the PLR site. Also check out the article “Flash, Bang, Burn!” on page 16 of this issue. Be safe! 

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## Class A

■ Two Soldiers suffered fatal injuries when the M113A3 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) they were riding in rolled over. The vehicle's driver lost control when the APC gained speed going down a slight hill. The accident occurred during the mid-afternoon.

## Class B (Damage)

■ An M1A2 Abrams caught fire during a training center live-fire exercise. The fire originated in the tank's electric mechanical fuel system. No injuries were reported. The accident occurred in the late afternoon.



## Class A

■ Soldier was killed when the M1114 up-armored HMMWV he was riding in rolled over. The Soldier was serving as the vehicle's gunner and was pinned in the vehicle after the accident. The accident occurred during the early morning.

## Class B (Damage)

■ An M978 HEMTT fuel tanker suffered Class B damage when it struck a guardrail and rolled over. The driver was merging with traffic when he steered the vehicle into the road's soft shoulder and hit the guardrail. No injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the early morning.

■ A 5-ton gun truck suffered Class B damage when it struck a civilian vehicle and rolled over.

The civilian vehicle turned in front of the gun truck, which then ran over the vehicle and overturned off the roadway. The gun truck driver was wearing his seatbelt, and no injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the early afternoon.

## Class C

■ An M998 HMMWV caught fire and suffered Class C damage while its crew was conducting a police call on a range. The vehicle had overheated earlier in the day, but maintenance personnel thought they had corrected the problem. The driver shut down the HMMWV when he noticed black smoke and flames coming from underneath the hood and through the heater vents. The crew conducted an evacuation drill but couldn't find the vehicle's fire extinguisher; instead, personnel in the tactical operations center brought extinguishers to the accident site. The extinguisher was not stored in the proper place on the vehicle. Maintenance determined the fire started under the fuel filter, at which point the main fuel line came loose and sprayed fuel in the engine compartment.



## Class A

■ Soldier suffered a fatal gunshot wound to his forehead during live-fire training. The Soldier was evacuated from the training area and died at a local hospital. The accident occurred during the early evening.

■ A foreign national troop suffered a fatal gunshot wound after an Army unit mistook the foreign nationals to be enemy forces and fired on them. The accident occurred during the late evening.

■ Soldier collapsed and died after completing a unit conditioning obstacle course and 2-mile run. The Soldier was pronounced dead at the local medical center. The accident occurred during the early morning.

■ Soldier collapsed while running during physical training. The Soldier was transported to the local medical center, where he died a short time later. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

■ Soldier collapsed on a track while running and was pronounced dead within an hour at the local troop medical center. The accident occurred during the early morning.

■ Soldier collapsed and died while taking the Army Physical Fitness Test. The Soldier did not respond to lifesaving procedures. The accident occurred during the early morning.

## Class B

■ Part of Soldier's left ring finger was amputated when it caught on the rear of an LMTV. The Soldier was dismounting the vehicle following night driver's training. The accident occurred during the late evening.

# what were they Thinking?

## The A-Team

**F**orrest Gump might not have been a smart man, but he got one thing right when he said, “Stupid is as stupid does.” These words came to mind as I looked through the Class D accident reports in the Combat Readiness Center’s database, searching for the right story to kick off the new feature you’re reading now. There’s nothing funny when a Soldier gets hurt, whether by his own hand or the enemy’s. However, there are some “Duh!” incidents out there that could’ve been much worse but fortunately weren’t. This month’s feature is one such story. The Soldiers involved will probably laugh about their “adventure” sometime in the future, but they’ve got to get back in their commander’s good graces first. If you have a story you can laugh

about now, we’ll gladly publish it (anonymously, of course!) in this forum. For more information on how to share your story, send an e-mail to [countermeasure@crc.army.mil](mailto:countermeasure@crc.army.mil).

Cut the guys some slack—they were just having a little fun, right? It was a beautiful summer morning in the American desert. A private and a sergeant took an M1009 Commercial Utility Cargo Vehicle for a preventive maintenance checks and services road test. Although they’d been instructed to stay on the asphalt roadway, the two Soldiers figured they’d check out the vehicle’s off-road handling. Those open spaces were so tempting, and a small hill beckoned in the distance.

Thinking they’d found the perfect spot, the Soldiers jumped the truck over the hill. Since it was so much fun the

first time, they jumped the hill again; however, their good time was short lived. The third jump was the charm (or strike, depending on how you look at it). On that fateful jump, the truck hit the ground so hard its front end bent under and damaged several necessary parts.

Seeing they’d have a lot of explaining to do, the Soldiers decided to head back to the hardball road. What they couldn’t see, however, was the busted oil pan or the trail of oil the truck was leaving behind. The truck ground to a halt as the engine froze, and the Soldiers had to call a wrecker to tow them to the armory.

Luckily these two “stuntmen” were wearing their seatbelts and walked away unharmed. Their backsides, however, didn’t fare so well and their driving days are

over, at least for now. The classroom—not the open road—will be their domain for the next few months. Both Soldiers were ordered to retake the Defensive Driver’s Course and were counseled on the proper way to follow instructions. They’ll also be attending a risk management class before they attempt any future activity.

Lastly, these two adventurous Soldiers won’t be road-testing other vehicles any time soon. Both their driver’s licenses were suspended until their senior driver’s training NCO can schedule them for refresher training. Give them a break? I don’t think so! 

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# SEATBELT SUCCESS STORIES Class C

Spotlighting Soldiers who wore their seatbelts and walked away from potentially catastrophic



- The gunner of an M1025 HMMWV suffered minor injuries when his vehicle was hit head-on by a civilian tractor-trailer. The HMMWV was stopped on the side of the road when it was struck by the truck, which drove through a concrete barrier before it hit the HMMWV. The HMMWV’s driver was not injured. The gunner was momentarily dislodged from his

seat upon impact, but his seatbelt kept him inside the vehicle.

- Two Soldiers escaped unharmed when their M2A3 threw a track and overturned. The vehicle tracks locked when the left-side track threw, causing one of the track shoes to break. The Soldiers were conducting route reconnaissance along a main supply route.

Both Soldiers were wearing their personal protective equipment (PPE) and seatbelts.

- The driver of an M915A2 was not injured when the truck overturned en route to a forward operating base. The truck was pulling an M872A3 trailer. A palletized load system (PLS) trailer, which was stacked with five PLS flat racks, was loaded

on the M872A3. The truck overturned when the driver approached an extremely tight turn in the road. The weight of the flat racks and the trailer’s high center of gravity, along with a 10-inch drop-off on the side of the road, caused the accident. The Soldier was not speeding and was wearing his seatbelt and proper PPE.

STOP THE LOSSES



WIN THE FIGHT

stay  
on the  
edge

USE COMPOSITE  
**RISK**  
MANAGEMENT



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