

Know the Edge... Then Own the Edge



Our Soldiers continue to do a great job for our Nation in more than 120 countries. In training or in combat, exposure and tempo are high; the terrain is complex and the missions are certainly challenging. Our Soldiers are combatants and on the edge. Composite Risk Management (CRM) teaches Soldiers to manage risk and "Own the Edge" by applying the proper control measures.

I recently gave a brief to a diverse group of folks and focused on the need for leaders to train Soldiers to Own the Edge through CRM. After the brief, a retired general officer scribbled a simple note on a piece of paper and handed it to me. In the message, he asked how Soldiers could Own the Edge if they didn't know where the edge was. It was a profound question.

Leaders at every level, from squad leader to general officer, are responsible for knowing their Soldiers and identifying where they are most at risk, then teaching, coaching, and mentoring them to emplace control measures. Because of maturity, experience, and training, the edge is different for each Soldier. Whether it's during a complex air assault in combat or a weekend on the lake, leaders must know where their Soldiers are at risk, reach into their kit bag, pull out the tool that fits that Soldier, and apply it to the specific situation. Leaders have to show Soldiers where the edge is ... and then teach them to own it!

The Army is counting on each of us to preserve the human capital in our formations, and you're doing great work! For the first time in 3 years, our Army's loss rates are beginning to turn



downward. We're currently 12 percent below last year's accident rates for this time of year, with almost 27 percent fewer accidental fatalities. This is an encouraging trend and we must keep pressing forward. For ideas and tools, visit the CRC's Web site at <https://crc.army.mil> and select the "Commander's Corner" link.

Whether in combat, training, or just blowing off steam, leaders need to be involved in identifying risks for each Soldier. With leader involvement, Soldiers can know where the edge is ... by applying CRM, they can OWN IT! 🌟

BG Joe Smith
Director of Army Safety
CG, CRC

Off the Beaten Path

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DIVISION
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

The accident sequence

After completing a tactical exercise without troops, 11 student NCOs and two instructors made an unplanned stop at a demolition area. After discussing the terrain and possible methods for disposing of explosive material, the students left the access road and walked 100 meters south to the hulk of an abandoned armored personnel carrier (APC).

The students talked about the APC's capabilities and characteristics for several minutes. Following the discussion, six students and one instructor returned to their vehicle while the remaining five students and instructor stayed at the hulk. One student noticed a flattened, tarnished, cylindrical-shaped object lying on the ground and picked it up. After visually examining the object, he tossed it on the abandoned APC's ramp.

The object wasn't ordinary trash, however. It was a 40 mm unexploded ordnance (UXO) round, and it blew up when it hit the ramp. The five remaining student NCOs were hit by shrapnel, and three—including the NCO who handled the UXO—were seriously injured. One Soldier suffered a permanent partial disability.

After reading this newspaper-style description of what happened, you might conclude the NCO who picked up and tossed the UXO suffered a really bad lapse of judgment, which is a correct assumption. However, let's look at ...



“When a Soldier learns, understands, and applies the Combat Readiness Center's concepts and tools, he can **“Own the Edge”** without even knowing he is managing risk because it becomes **instinctive, intuitive, and predictive.**”

—BG Joe Smith, Commanding General,
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

The rest of the story

The accident investigation revealed three additional contributing factors:

- The course manager didn't properly communicate his intent to the instructors. He also didn't ensure the instructors understood they were not authorized to do anything other than the tactical exercise without troops. This failure resulted in the instructors making an unapproved stop at the demolition area, which was significant because the primary instructor wasn't range certified and was unaware of the hazards there.

- The primary instructor failed to conduct even basic planning

before stopping at the demolition area. As such, he wasn't conscious of potential hazards in the demolition area. This also was his first time on the range complex.

- The area where the accident occurred was not visibly marked as a UXO-prone environment. There were no visible signs to alert personnel the only cleared area on the range was the access road. Had signs been present, the instructors and students would've known the hazards and never left the access road.

Bottom line

Seldom is an accident the result of one person's actions. Only through close examination

of the events that led up to an accident can all the contributing factors be discovered. This same approach can be used when close calls occur, and they happen all the time. Look closely to see what events leading up to the accident could've been interrupted or eliminated. In most cases, if only one event was interrupted or eliminated, the accident could've been prevented.

Although interruption and intervention are valid methods for dealing with risk, identifying and mitigating hazards before operations begin is far more effective than acting when a problem does occur. Using Composite Risk Management (CRM) is the best way to accomplish this task. CRM is the cornerstone of the Army concept that allows individual Soldiers and leaders at every level to positively impact operations. By coupling knowledge and experience with modern risk management tools and techniques, CRM lets everyone in the formation operate at the edge of their capabilities while safely performing their missions.

To learn more about CRM, visit the Combat Readiness Center's Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>. It's better to be prepared than make an unplanned stop at the hospital. Own the Edge!

Comments regarding this article may be directed to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (CRC) Help Desk at (334) 255-1390, DSN 558-1390, or by e-mail at helpdesk@crc.army.mil. The Accident Investigation Division may be reached through CRC Operations at (334) 255-3410, DSN 558-3410, or by e-mail at operationssupport@crc.army.mil.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Army Combat Readiness Center (CRC) posts all accident information on its Risk Management Information System (RMIS) Web site, <https://crc.army.mil/rmis/>, for your use in accident prevention purposes. This information is intended for use as a briefing tool at the unit level to educate personnel on mission hazards, associated risks, and lessons learned while helping Soldiers develop effective control measures.

All you need to access the site is your AKO user name and password. To retrieve accident data, click on the "Accident

Overview" icon on the left side of the screen, then select "Preliminary Accident Report." From there, select "Aviation" or "Ground," depending on the type of data you need. Following these steps, you must click the "Accept Conditions" button to go any further. You then can view accident data such as executive summaries, histories, findings and recommendations, and actual vignettes with hazards and controls. Anyone with questions concerning RMIS can contact the CRC Help Desk at (334) 255-1390, DSN 558-1390, or by e-mail at helpdesk@crc.army.mil.

Cornerstones of a Successful Safety Program

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The 4th Fires Brigade is just past the halfway point in its current Operation Iraqi Freedom rotation. We're pausing for a moment to identify areas where we think we've set the conditions for safety, as well as areas we can improve.

Our organization consists of 12 battalion- or separate company-sized units made up of more than 3,000 Soldiers and 700 pieces of equipment either organic to the brigade or under our operational control during the deployment. Within that framework are hundreds of different missions ranging from our organic TAB battery's mobile training team operations, which provides technical and tactical

expertise in the employment of the Army's new Lightweight Counter Mortar Radar, to the headquarters of headquarters battery running convoys for the brigade commander's movement through Baghdad.

In the monthly review of our safety program, we've identified some key building blocks that have enabled us to conduct varied operations throughout our battle space. During these operations, we've experienced limited accidents and injuries to our Soldiers and equipment while maintaining our focus on warfighting and accomplishing the mission. Not all our success comes from actions typically thought of as risk mitigation, but the following elements have

proven significant in keeping our Soldiers safe and successful.

Brigade safety officer

Our safety officer is the cornerstone of the commander's safety program and is responsible for ensuring safety is observed throughout the brigade. He consolidates all safety guidelines and standing operating procedures (SOPs) that are significant to every scenario and event Soldiers might encounter daily. Our units recently conducted M1114 lanes designed to evaluate Soldier performance and actions before, during, and after convoy operations. In response to the convoys' actions during the simulated scenarios, additional

safety guidelines and SOPs have been developed and added to the existing convoy SOP.

Daily risk assessments

Daily risk assessments are the foundation of our risk management strategy. At the morning battle update brief (BUB), the brigade safety officer assesses the hazards for the day. He begins this process each Sunday, when he updates a weekly composite risk assessment based on projected weekly missions, other coalition operations, weather, and the current enemy situation and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). Then, each morning before the BUB, the safety officer ensures the risk assessment is still valid and makes any needed changes. During the brief, he focuses the battalion, battery, and company leadership on key hazards they might face that day. The BUB provides an opportunity for the commanders and the safety officer to come together and discuss current safety issues.

Command climate

Another key building block of our success here is the relationship between the commanders and special staff. The staff and commanders have a mutual trust and understanding regarding the safety program. Every effort has been made to ensure free dialog continues between the command teams and the safety subject matter expert.

This policy has created an environment where subordinate units can meet and objectively discuss issues at the monthly safety meetings or incident review boards without fear of the discussion turning into a “blame game.” This special relationship also allows for positive reinforcement with weekly safety inspections.

At the Wednesday morning BUB, the safety officer announces the week’s inspection focus. This focus is determined with significant input from the subordinate units. The inspection is conducted by the safety officer and gives the subordinate commander an additional set of objective eyes to assess the safety programs at their level. The areas of inspection cover a wide variety of topics such as fire extinguishers, ensuring proper documentation is in the dispatch books, or the type of protective eyewear worn by Soldiers. The results of the previous week’s inspections are displayed at the BUB, but care is taken to ensure only trends are displayed, not which units had issues. This strategy preserves the open working environment between the subordinate units and safety officer while highlighting areas that need additional focus.

Monthly safety council meetings

Monthly safety council meetings are opened by the brigade commander or the deputy commanding officer and

run by the brigade command sergeant major. These meetings provide a forum for dialog on current trends and safety issues. The safety officer is always present at these meetings and helps capture the brigade’s trends and TTPs for success. The command sergeant major keeps the focus on what we’ve done, what we did well, and where we can improve. This forum atmosphere keeps the focus on fixing an issue rather than simply providing time for a standard pitch by the safety officer.

‘Heightened awareness’ and other programs

In the event of an incident or if a unit isn’t following safety guidelines, the brigade adopts a “heightened awareness” posture at the unit level. The unit conducts a safety stand-down for 24 hours to provide corrective training and safety awareness. Instead of the usual white flag, a red flag is flown over the headquarters building during this time. The red flag lets others know the unit is conducting additional safety training or investigating an incident or accident that occurred as a result of non-compliance with safety guidelines.

Other factors, including training events and Soldier caring programs, increase our safety posture by providing a fresh look at areas where Soldiers might become complacent, such as repetitive missions in a

combat environment. Events such as semi-annual combat logistics patrol lanes provide an excellent opportunity for leaders to check unit safety considerations and procedures and certify sections in their ability to conduct the given task. Soldier caring programs help identify at-risk personnel and are an effective risk reduction tool and key component of the unit's safety program.

Individual counseling

Our units conduct individual counseling with Soldiers on a regular basis. The need for safety in day-to-day operations is reinforced during counseling. The units also conduct personalized counseling for Soldiers getting ready to return home on leave, which ensures safety expectations are explained down to the Soldier level throughout the brigade. Every supervisor also maintains a leader's book to help them implement the appropriate risk reduction measures for their section and identify potential areas or personnel who pose an increased risk to themselves or the unit.

The accident prevention chain

Risk mitigation controls are a series of links in the accident prevention chain, and it takes only one successful link to keep an accident from occurring. Most accidents aren't caused by a single error; rather, they're due to a series of control measure

failures. Any leader or Soldier can prevent an accident from happening, but only if they know the control measures.

Here's an example. A Soldier had a Class C accident when he lost his footing and fell while dismounting the back of an FMTV. Attempting to break his fall, the Soldier pushed himself away from the vehicle. However, he landed on his side and fractured his elbow. After a thorough investigation, brigade leadership determined the cause of the accident was simply a failure to observe common safety measures. This incident could've been prevented if any one of the following controls had been observed: the Soldiers should've been trained properly on their new vehicles, systems, and operations; the Soldiers should've emplaced and used ladders when mounting and dismounting oversized vehicles like the FMTV; the injured Soldier should've maintained three points of contact when mounting and dismounting the vehicle; and the Soldiers should've used designated loading docks when loading and unloading heavy cargo.

Conclusion

As our brigade continues its mission, our Soldiers likely will encounter significant changes in their surroundings that require different approaches. As the situation progresses, existing courses of action will become outdated and require major changes. To remain competent and effective, our brigade safety

officer will continue to develop safety programs designed to tackle every situation. We'll continue conducting monthly safety council meetings and reevaluate and recertify each unit's safety program quarterly or semi-annually. Brigade leadership has made safety a priority, and we ask each of our Soldiers to take safety seriously. They deserve nothing less than our best effort!

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Simulated IEDs, Real Problems

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Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are one of the biggest threats currently facing our Soldiers in Southwest Asia. In an effort to better prepare their Soldiers for operations in theater, some commanders and units are constructing

makeshift IEDs for use in pre-deployment training. Although their intentions are good, the risks associated with using homemade IEDs might be worse than the potential training benefits.

Some models of these training devices use standard

approved munitions in nonstandard, untested, and unorthodox ways. Several devices use the M21 Artillery Flash Simulator, often referred to as the “Hoffman,” which is actually the firing device for the M21. The Hoffman is one of the most dangerous simulators in

the Army inventory and is responsible for more explosives accidents and personnel injuries than any other simulator.

In addition to the dangers presented by the Hoffman, at least two different devices contain flour, which might seem harmless enough. However, flour

“ **Real IEDs** are claiming enough lives in theater—don’t let a **simulated** one at home take any of your Soldiers out of the fight! ”

creates an inhalation hazard for personnel, and finely pulverized flour dispersed in air can become explosive. The combination of flour particles with military munitions can create a fuel-air explosive.

Use of nonstandard munitions, or using approved munitions in nonstandard ways, is prohibited by Army regulations and also might violate federal law. Some restrictions include:

- Army Regulation (AR) 385-63, *Range Safety*, paragraph 2-2, which requires all munitions and lasers used on ranges to have a surface danger zone (SDZ). Nonstandard items do not have approved SDZs.

- AR 385-63, paragraph 2-3, which prohibits the use of nonstandard ammunition or the alteration of standard ammunition.

- Department of the Army Pamphlet 385-63, "Range Safety," paragraphs 3-3a, c, g, and h, which reinforce the restrictions put forth in AR 385-63 and prohibit the use of standard items in new and unique ways.

Explosive ordnance

disposal personnel will be contacted to respond to any of the following situations: if a makeshift IED training device is inadvertently left on the range and later found; if such a device is found unattended at any location; if such a device is found under other unknown or suspicious circumstances; and if such a device is transported off post. In any of these scenarios, the simulated devices will be treated as a real IED threat. In addition, the individuals responsible for the devices could be prosecuted under federal law. The Federal Bureau of Investigation considers the discovery of any such device under suspicious circumstances an IED incident.

The good news is the Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training, and Instrumentation (PEO STRI) recently procured a greatly improved IED training kit and is currently fielding it throughout the Army. Called Training Improvised Explosive Device Increment 2 (TIED2), the kit includes several devices of different sizes—large,

pressure-sensitive mine, and booby trap.

The TIED2 is a safe, effective system that provides non-pyrotechnic signatures using carbon dioxide and is much improved over the initial TIED many Soldiers might've used in the past. Initial fielding by PEO STRI to installation training support centers recently was completed, with each post receiving between 6 and 44 kits. Additional kits have been fielded to Marine Corps and miscellaneous other CONUS and OCONUS units and installations. Each kit, which can be configured for remote initiation with multiple devices, contains an operator's manual (Technical Manual 9-6920-923-10), an approved trainer program of instruction, and approved SDZs. A pocket guide, prepared system safety assessment, and health hazard report also are available.

We must do everything we can to protect our most valuable asset, our Soldiers. Leaders must procure only approved training aids and devices when preparing their

Soldiers for combat, not homemade items that haven't been tested or approved for Army use. Real IEDs are claiming enough lives in theater—don't let a simulated one at home take any of your Soldiers out of the fight!

Editor's note: The PEO STRI point of contact for the TIED2 is MAJ Carl Kimball, who may be contacted with questions about procuring the system at (407) 384-5213, DSN 970-5213, or by e-mail at charles.kimball@us.army.mil.

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Feel the HEAT

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Editor's note: While the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer currently is not a standardized Army program or training tool and has not received an official safety confirmation, several Army commands have seen its usefulness in injury mitigation, built their own device, and developed tactics, techniques, and procedures for training.

Accidents can happen anywhere, anytime—even in a learning environment such as a training exercise. Therefore, it's important Soldiers are trained to prepare for any possibility, whether they're getting ready to deploy to theater, actively engaged in combat, or maintaining readiness at home. With this reasoning in mind, several safety officers developed the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) to arm vehicle crews with the knowledge to survive in the most extreme circumstances and mitigate injuries in potentially catastrophic rollover accidents.

The HEAT consists of a HMMWV cab mounted to a tank engine maintenance stand. An electric motor turns the device 180 degrees in about 6 seconds, and it can be stopped at a variety of angles and turned upright with a flip of the same switch that inverted it. Instructors tilt the HEAT at a 30-degree angle early in the training to simulate the conditions found when a vehicle is about to roll over.

Personnel get the 180-degree effect near the end of the training, an experience that teaches them the value of their

seatbelts and effective crew communication. Suspended upside down, trainees learn to react quickly to the situation and trust each other and their equipment. Once they realize their seatbelts can hold their weight—even with all their gear—they're able to focus on safety positions and communication drills.

CFLCC's HEAT has been operational for several months, and instructors have been training Soldiers on rollover and other emergency procedures since early this year. Coalition troops also have been trained on the HEAT, including HMMWV crews from the central Asian republic of Georgia. One such crew credits HEAT training with their survival during a recent real-world rollover in theater.

The Georgian crew was participating in a training exercise on Udairi Range in Kuwait, and together they'd completed HEAT training the day before. Their HMMWV was proceeding down a counter-improvised explosive device lane when the driver steered around an obstacle, placing two of the vehicle's wheels on a 10-inch berm. The driver tried to get back on the road but overcorrected severely, causing the HMMWV to roll over on its top.

The vehicle's gunner, CPL Levani Lomtadze, said he and the other crewmembers quickly realized the HMMWV was going to flip over and immediately assumed the correct positions they'd been taught in HEAT training. "We did what we were



trained to do to survive," CPL Lomtadze said. "If we hadn't taken that class, we wouldn't have known what to do."

The Georgians' accident was the first rollover incident involving service members that have gone through HEAT training. It's important to note the Georgians completed the training as a crew, and this cooperative approach is a key goal of the CFLCC HEAT team. If regular crews are allowed to train together, each individual becomes familiar with commands and reaction drills while growing more confident in their fellow crewmembers' abilities. Trust and communication are important factors in training crews together before they face actual combat.

CPL Lomtadze certainly believes in the HEAT. He has these words of wisdom for Soldiers scheduled to take a turn in the device: "If you follow the rules set during the training, you'll avoid serious injury during rollover accidents." He should know—he's here to talk about it!

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BANG! Are You Dead?

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“Don’t worry, my weapon isn’t loaded.”
“I know mine isn’t loaded. Are you sure yours isn’t too?”
“Yeah, don’t worry—I’m a trained, professional Soldier just like you. These pistols the Army issues us are the safest handguns in the world. Here, let me show you all the safety features.”

“BANG!”

“Oh, man, are you okay? Oh, man. Don’t die, man, don’t die. GET HELP! GET HELP FAST!”

This situation, unfortunately, wasn’t hypothetical; it actually happened in Iraq. A short time after this exchange, the injured Soldier lay in an operating room, dying from a gunshot wound to his chest. The doctor who tried to save the Soldier told me this story. Sadly, the “shooter” now has plenty of time to think about firearms safety procedures as he serves a lengthy sentence at the U.S. Military Disciplinary Barracks in Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Do you think time at

Leavenworth is too harsh a punishment for an accident? The Army disagrees—it’s called “negligent discharge,” not “accidental discharge.” Pointing a firearm at an unintended target is negligence. Failing to properly unload a firearm is negligence. Horseplay with a firearm is negligence.

The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) provides definitions for differing levels of negligence. There are a variety of actions under the UCMJ for

negligent discharges, including Article 134, “Firearm, Discharging Through Negligence”; Article 134, “Negligent Homicide”; and Article 92, “Dereliction of Duty.” Needless to say, no Soldier wants to ever be tried under any of these provisions. So, how do we stop negligent discharges within the Army?

The answer is simple: Soldiers must act professionally whenever they carry their weapons. When a Soldier is shot unintentionally, either through inattention or indiscipline, it reflects poorly on the whole Army. It’s not a matter of just *looking* unprofessional; it’s really about some Soldiers *being* unprofessional. All Soldiers can reaffirm their professionalism, however, by learning and practicing the basics of firearm safety every day.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Beretta M9 pistol has an integrated loaded chamber indicator. Soldiers can look at or even feel the extractor to determine whether a cartridge is in the chamber. The pistol is loaded if the extractor is raised (which can be determined by touch or by looking for a red mark on the extractor). This isn't the ideal method for checking the

weapon's status, but if the indicator shows the chamber is loaded and the pistol should be unloaded, take the appropriate steps to clear the weapon. Never assume the weapon is unloaded just because the magazine is removed; rather, always treat the weapon as if it's loaded and practice safe muzzle control.



The basics

- Always assume the weapon is loaded
- Control the muzzle—keep it pointed downrange or in a safe direction at all times
- Don't touch the trigger unless you intend to fire the weapon
- Unload the weapon at times and in places you don't expect to use it, such as in dining facilities or secure areas

Here's a practical example of how the basic rules work. Let's say you've just entered a secured room and spot a pistol lying on a table. First, assume the pistol is loaded. Second, control the pistol's muzzle. Remember, you don't have to have the pistol in your hand to control the muzzle. If it's pointing toward you, move out of the way and approach the weapon from its rear or side. If the muzzle is pointing toward someone else, tell them to move out of the weapon's projected path. These steps should be accomplished before anyone touches the weapon.

Once the muzzle is controlled, evaluate the weapon without touching it to determine if you're familiar with that particular model. If you're not experienced with it, send for someone who is. Pick the weapon up only if you're confident you know how to

maintain muzzle control but keep your finger off the trigger and ensure no other items come in contact with it. If the muzzle can be pointed in a safer direction, such as at the ground, do so before attempting the final basic step—unloading. Keep in mind you're still to assume the weapon is loaded, control the muzzle, and keep your finger off the trigger during clearing. Always follow the proper clearing procedures for the weapon type and ensure the weapon is on safe once it's cleared.

Someone gave me a piece of advice years ago that still holds true today. That advice was not to rely on only one sense, namely sight, to make sure a weapon is unloaded. After visually inspecting the chamber, double check by feeling the chamber's opening with your finger. This "fail safe" check should confirm the visual inspection, but if you have any doubt, look again or have a second person check the weapon. You can never be too safe.

Just because the weapon is unloaded and you're "dry firing" it doesn't mean you can point it at people, animals, or any other unintended target. Remember, safety always applies! Assume the weapon is loaded, control the muzzle,

to carry a loaded weapon, but you still have to follow the rules. You can control the muzzle and keep your finger off the trigger while working in an operational capacity. You know the weapon is loaded instead of assuming so, which makes muzzle control even more important. Never point the weapon at your buddies, allies, or any known non-combatants, and don't put your finger on the trigger unless you intend to fire the weapon.

There's no doubt weapons handling is more complex when you're in an operational environment. In addition to protecting your fellow Soldiers, you have to consider what's around any potential targets. For instance, is there a schoolyard full of kids just behind your vehicle checkpoint? If you were to open fire on a bad guy but injure a non-combatant in the process, you can bet you'd make the evening news. Always consider the potential second- and third-order effects every time you pull the trigger.

Storage

You can't be with your weapon all the time to ensure it's safe, so you should store it in accordance with your unit's standing operating procedures. Maintain muzzle control and

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT ...



• In 2001, 422 males and 281 females in the United States died from negligent discharge of firearms (National Vital Statistics Report, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 2003)

• In 2003, 10 Soldiers died from negligent discharge of firearms; in 2004, 9 Soldiers died from negligent discharges (U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center statistics, 2005)

Approximately 600,000 Soldiers and 125,000

Reservists served during the years 2003 and 2004. When you do the math, there are 10 times more negligent discharges reported annually in the Army than in the U.S. civilian population, despite the fact many civilians aren't properly trained in firearms handling. Today's well-trained warriors can eliminate these deaths and save about 10 Soldiers every year by practicing safe weapons handling.

always store the weapon unloaded, but remember to assume it's loaded. Place the weapon inside its case or locker so it's facing away from you when you open the container. If you store a pistol in a holster, point the holster and pistol in a safe direction before withdrawing or stowing the weapon. Pay particular attention to the retention straps on the holster or case and make sure none are close to the trigger guard or can apply pressure to the trigger. Also, never drag a rifle or shotgun toward you by the barrel. If something is tangled around the trigger while you pull the weapon toward you, you're squeezing the trigger with the muzzle pointed directly at you.

Leadership and additional considerations

You must take immediate action and make an on-the-spot correction if you see other Soldiers or service members

engaging in unsafe acts with firearms. Inaction in these situations is unprofessional and irresponsible. Remember, whatever you're willing to tolerate just became the new standard.

Never use ammunition or weapon parts not issued by the military. You're mistaken if you think you're a better ammunition or firearms designer than the experts working for the Government acquisition program. As a Soldier, you're expected to use the equipment the military supplies, and not doing so puts both you and your unit at risk. Using ammunition or parts that don't meet military specifications or placing parts designed for the M4 on an M16A2 can create a "frankenweapon" that probably will fail you when you need it most. If that weapon malfunctioned and fired accidentally during clearing, it most likely would be recorded as a negligent discharge whether or

not anyone was hurt. Any Soldier that takes deliberate steps to perform unauthorized modifications on their weapon is negligent.

Final thoughts

I once knew a 28-year-old man who worked at a convenience store. One night, three teenagers robbed the store and forced the clerk to the back of the building, where they shot him in the back of the head with a shotgun. This was a very tragic incident, but we

hear about these type things so much on the news that we're almost accustomed to shootings. Even so, I wasn't prepared to see that man's 5-year-old daughter sobbing at the funeral home, asking everyone when she'd see her dad again.

I tell this story because you might think a Soldier dying from a negligent discharge is different from the deliberate murder of a store clerk. The end result, however, is the same—a grieving spouse, children without their parent, and a family without a loved one. Think about those families at home the next time you pick up your weapon. It's time for you, as a professional Soldier, to "Own the Edge!"

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New Web site puts CRM tools at Soldiers' fingertips

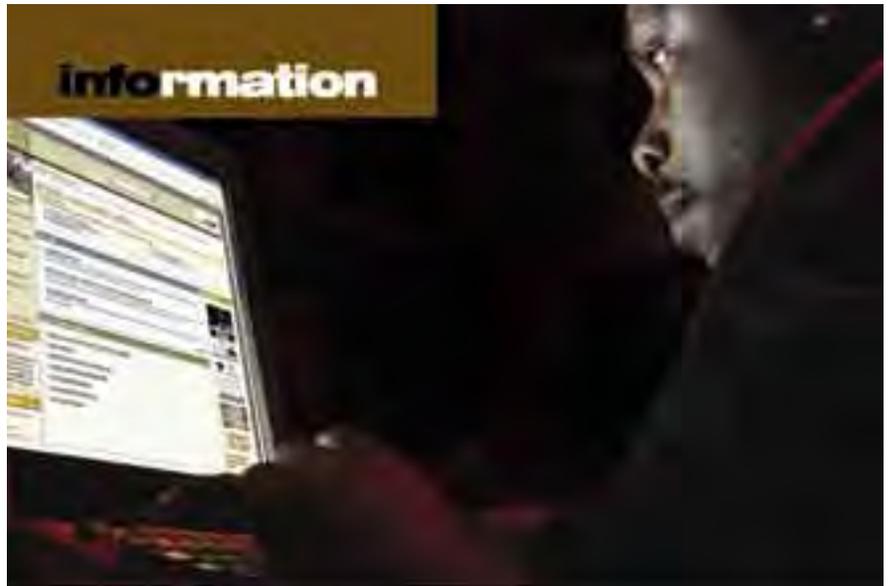
KELLY WIDENER

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The Army Combat Readiness Center (CRC) recently launched a new design for its Web site, making it even easier for commanders, first-line supervisors, and individual Soldiers to find and use Composite Risk Management (CRM) tools and programs. The initiative is one aspect of the Army's ongoing "Own the Edge" campaign, which is a critical component of total Army transformation, acceleration of future force capabilities, and reduction of loss to enhance the current force.

The CRC, which serves as the knowledge center for all Army losses, focuses on sustaining readiness and achieving an overall reduction of these losses. This process requires increased emphasis on and development and implementation of specific safety programs and the CRM concept via interactive Web-based tools. Quick links, tabbed categories, and a new search engine coupled with a new structure are just a few of the features that make CRM tools, programs, and information more readily accessible on the Web site, helping Soldiers connect the dots on loss prevention.

A safety program won't be successful if it doesn't provide the means and tools for each Soldier and civilian to participate in maintaining our combat force. The CRC's goal is to provide



those means and tools within a few clicks to better serve our Soldiers. High-hit programs include "Commander's Corner," "Got Risk?," the ASMIS-2 POV Risk Assessment Tool, loss reporting links, and media and training tools. Additionally, Combat Readiness University is currently offering or linking to more than 1,700 courses and resources.

The CRC Web site and Own the Edge campaign are part of a knowledge-based strategy emphasizing Army tools and programs to support and improve combat readiness and reduce Army losses. Once Soldiers internalize CRM, they begin making smart risk decisions wherever they are, be it in theater, in garrison, at home, or on the road. To find out more about CRM and the tools that can help you Own the Edge, visit the CRC Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>.

Motorcycle Mentorship Program

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The Motorcycle Mentorship Program (MMP) is another initiative recently launched by the CRC to bring motorcycle safety awareness into focus at the lowest organizational level. This focused effort follows the loss of 45 Soldiers to motorcycle accidents during Fiscal Year (FY) 2005, a dramatic increase from the 22 Soldiers lost in FY04. Army leaders believe the MMP can make a great impact on reducing motorcycle fatalities because they know the program can work. It's modeled after a similar program initiated by the U.S. Air Force in 2004 after that service experienced a great increase in its motorcycle fatalities. Since that time, Air Force officials say they've experienced a 50-percent reduction in motorcycle accidents across the board.

The MMP is based on the formation of motorcycle clubs that allow more experienced riders to pass their knowledge, training, life experiences, and learned safety skills to new motorcyclists. The clubs will provide an outlet for Soldiers to enjoy the experience of owning a motorcycle while they learn to ride safely. The mentors will become safer riders by developing their leadership, teaching, and coaching skills as they help the Army reduce motorcycle fatalities.

The CRC currently is coordinating with nine beta test phase locations to evaluate the interest and impact of the MMP on motorcycle accidents at the participating installations, which also are encouraging the establishment of local rider clubs. The overall development of installation-level clubs is a partnership between the club or association and the installation

commander, who, according to Army Regulation (AR) 210-22, *Private Organizations on Department of the Army Installations*, can endorse each club's charter and allow it to function as a private organization. After meeting the regulatory guidance in AR 210-22, the club can coordinate support from the installation safety office, commanders, first sergeants, supervisors, motorists, and the military and civilian communities at large. The establishment of motorcycle clubs as private organizations on installations is one component of this community approach.

To initiate an MMP on your installation, contact your post installation safety officer or visit the CRC's MMP Web site

at <https://crc.army.mil/mmp/> for more information. The site contains training materials and MMP development guides produced by the CRC in cooperation with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and Harley-Davidson Motor Company. Anyone with questions regarding the MMP may contact CW4 Earnest Eakins, Motorcycle Safety Program Manager, at (334) 255-2781, DSN 558-2781, or by e-mail at earnest.eakins@us.army.mil.

Comments regarding this article may be directed to Kelly Widener, CRC Public Affairs Officer, (334) 255-3770, DSN 558-3770, or by e-mail at kelly.widener@us.army.mil.





Class B (Damage)

■ A Long Range Site Surveillance System valued at \$400,000 was destroyed when a Stryker overturned during a training exercise. The Stryker and several other vehicles were traveling between ranges when the road became obscured by dust. The accident Stryker's driver failed to negotiate a turn and rolled the vehicle. The driver suffered minor injuries. The accident occurred during the late afternoon.



Class A

■ Soldier suffered head injuries resulting in a permanent total disability when the M1114 HMMWV he was riding in was hit by a truck traveling down the roadway's center. The "dingle," or cargo, truck was being driven by a local national. The Soldier was serving as the vehicle commander. No other injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the late morning.

Class B

■ Soldier's fingers were amputated during an M1114 rollover. The Soldier was serving as the vehicle's gunner on a patrol mission when the HMMWV overturned on an access ramp. He grabbed the turret shield but injured his hand on a sharp edge during the rollover. Four of the Soldier's fingers were severed during the accident and could not be reattached surgically. No other injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the early morning.



Class B (Damage)

An ATEX 22-ton crane suffered Class B damage when it rolled over. The crane's outriggers were not deployed at the time of the accident. The Soldier operating the vehicle suffered minor injuries. The accident occurred during the mid-afternoon.



Class A

■ Soldier suffered a fatal closed head injury after jumping from a C-130 aircraft. The Soldier was conducting a non-tactical jump and hit the ground hard upon landing. He was pronounced dead at a local medical center. The accident occurred during the late morning.

■ Soldier was killed by a friendly element during an enemy combat engagement. The Soldier and a foreign service member suffered fatal gunshot wounds during the incident. One other Soldier and three additional foreign service members were injured. The accident occurred during the early morning.

Class B

■ Soldier suffered

unspecified burns when a generator caught fire. The Soldier was checking the fuel levels on several generators and was not wearing any PPE. The accident occurred during the early morning.

■ Soldier suffered a permanent vision disability to one eye when he was struck by a simunition round fired by another Soldier during urban combat training. The injured Soldier raised his protective mask for unknown reasons during the training and was struck by the round, which was fired from an M4, shortly thereafter. The accident occurred during the late afternoon.

■ Soldier's leg was amputated below the knee following a static-line field training exercise jump. The Soldier's leg became entangled in his parachute's risers, causing serious injury when he impacted the ground. The accident occurred during the mid-evening.

■ Soldier suffered a permanent partial disability to his eyes after being struck in the head by a .38 caliber weapon. The Soldier was searching a foreign national

Seatbelt Success Stories

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

Class D

■ Soldier suffered a minor abrasion and another Soldier was uninjured when their M916 tractor overturned while pulling a trailer loaded with a 22.5-ton crane. The assigned driver injured himself while securing the crane before the mission, so the assistant driver operated the vehicle in his place. The rollover occurred during a combat patrol between two forward operating bases after the driver negotiated a sharp left turn. Both Soldiers were wearing their seatbelts. The accident occurred during the late afternoon.

■ One Soldier suffered minor injuries and another Soldier was unharmed when their M1097 HMMWV rolled over on a winding, wet road. The vehicle was outfitted with a shelter and generator set, causing the HMMWV to be top heavy. The driver reportedly was traveling too fast for the road conditions and vehicle type and lost control of the HMMWV while attempting to negotiate a curve. Both Soldiers were wearing their seatbelts. The accident occurred during the late morning.

■ Two Soldiers escaped without injury when their M1026 HMMWV overturned during a training scenario. The Soldiers were conducting a patrol when some Soldiers in another vehicle tossed a chem light, which was supposed to simulate a grenade, into the HMMWV's path. The driver tapped the brakes in response, but the vehicle went into an uncontrollable skid. He then tried to steer into the skid but overcorrected, causing the HMMWV to leave the roadway and hit an embankment before the vehicle flipped. Both Soldiers were wearing their seatbelts. The accident occurred during the early morning.

Class A

■ Soldier suffered a fatal closed head injury after jumping from a C-130 aircraft. The Soldier was conducting a non-tactical jump and hit the ground hard upon landing. He was pronounced dead at a local medical center. The accident occurred during the late morning.

police vehicle at a checkpoint when the weapon fired. No other details were reported. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

■ A Department of the Army civilian (DAC) suffered an unspecified injury resulting in a permanent partial disability when a detonation occurred at an ammunition plant. The DAC and two other civilians were unpacking and loading ammunition for burning and destruction when the detonation occurred. The other

two civilians also were injured. No other details were reported. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

Class C

■ Soldier suffered a concussion after falling during a PT run. The Soldier reportedly complained of dizziness before he fell and hit his forehead on the ground. He didn't seek medical treatment until he started experiencing headaches, at which time he was diagnosed with a concussion. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.



WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

SHOT IN THE FOOT

At some point or another, everyone's probably done or said something stupid that created problems for them either immediately or shortly thereafter. These temporary lapses of judgment might be called "shot in the foot" moments, because they're easy to get into but hard to walk away from. Soldiers aren't immune to such incidents, and recently several warriors literally shot themselves in the foot while handling their weapons in theater.

- Our first Soldier was preparing to leave base for a day combat mission and loaded his M9. While checking to ensure a round was chambered, he dropped the weapon, which fell to the ground with a thud and, unfortunately, a bang. The searing pain in his foot assured the Soldier a round was indeed chambered, although it's doubtful he wanted that sort of confirmation. The accident report attributed the Soldier's mistake to a failure "to firmly grip/hold equipment/material." The moral of the story is hold your weapon like your life (and at least your general health)

depends on it, because it does!

- The next hapless Soldier was standing in a host nation office when his weapon discharged and sent a round through one of his desert boots. Those boots are tough, but not tough enough to deflect a shot from a small-arms pistol. The host nation staff was treated to a real spectacle when the medical folks showed up and sped the Soldier to the nearest clinic, where he still was recuperating as of the time the accident report was filed.

- Another Soldier was coming off a range. After leaving the range, he initially did what he was supposed to do—namely, clearing the weapon—but didn't do it where he was supposed to, i.e., the clearing barrel. You can probably figure this out by now: The weapon wasn't clear, a round hit the Soldier's left foot, and he wound up watching TV from a hospital bed instead of doing his job. Clearing barrels are there to take the bullet for you, so use them!

- Our last incident involved two Soldiers "playing around" with an M14. Anytime the words "playing around" are used in

conjunction with a weapon, the results can't be good. One of the Soldiers loaded a magazine into the M14, pushed the safety switch to fire, and aimed the weapon at his "friend" before pulling the trigger. Fortunately (and we're using that term loosely), only the Soldier's arm was hit. He wound up in the hospital too, but at least it wasn't the morgue. One has to ask if these two geniuses really didn't think anything bad would happen with a loaded weapon switched to fire and aimed at one of them. With friends like that, the injured Soldier certainly doesn't need any enemies. But in this case, his biggest enemy was himself—he shouldn't have been playing around with a weapon in the first place, much less allowed another Soldier to load it and point it at him.

Negligent discharges are no laughing matter and often end with tragic consequences. Lucky for these Soldiers, they lived to tell their stories and maybe can chuckle about them one day, but they'll have to return to duty first. Treat your weapon with respect and keep your feet planted firmly on the edge!

POV stats

FY06
through April 06

Class A-C accidents/Soldiers killed

Cars	89/30
Vans	1/0
Trucks	29/10
Motorcycles	63/24
Other*	7/1

*Includes tractor-trailers, unknown POVs, mopeds, ATVs and bicycles

65

total DEATHS

FY05: **84** 3 year average: **67**