

# A Dead-Wrong Approach

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DIVISION  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center



**A**n infantry company was tasked to plan and execute a squad-level fire and maneuver lane. The company set up assembly and sleeping areas a few hundred meters from the lane. The ammunition point NCOIC issued live and blank ammunition from the same table, where both types were stored during the conduct of the range. There also were some smoke munitions in the same area.

The company cycled the squads through the day walk-through and blank fires before the live fires began. The company commander was the range officer-in-charge (OIC), and the platoon leaders alternated as the range safety officer (RSO) as their individual platoons went through the lane. Their duties included informing range support of the changes via radio or telephone.

The platoon sergeants and the company first sergeant performed safety duties during the squad iterations, as well as leader and range responsibilities. The company commander briefed each

squad at the start point before firing began. The brief was oriented toward the tactical aspects of the lane rather than a general briefing covering both tactical and accidental risks.

As daylight faded, the last few squads cycled through the lane. However, the unit wasn't pressed for time to complete the iterations. The first platoon, second squad received their safety brief from the company commander when they arrived at the start point for their iteration.

The squad engaged the first objective, and the squad leader fired a few rounds from his M4 rifle. One of the squad members ran out of ammunition at the second objective, so the squad leader handed the Soldier a loaded magazine from his assault vest. Another squad member ran out of ammunition at the third objective and was handed the magazine from the squad leader's M4. The squad leader then pulled an empty magazine from his vest and inserted it in his M4. However, the natural cycling of the ammunition caused a live round to be in the chamber

when the squad leader fired at the first objective.

When the lane was completed, the squad leader didn't clear his rifle properly, but the rest of the group cleared their weapons and were checked by team leaders within the squad. However, the safeties and RSO didn't verify all weapons were cleared. The company commander asked if all weapons were cleared, and the group said yes. The Soldiers then loaded a bus for the assembly area.

Dusk was setting in as the squad arrived at the assembly area, so the company ate chow and began the transition to night-fire iterations. During this downtime, the squad leader had come off the range and tasked a Soldier to install a PEQ-2A laser aiming device on his M4. The device originally was installed on the tasked Soldier's weapon, an M240B machine gun, which wasn't to be fired during the night iteration.

The squad leader handed his M4 to the Soldier, and neither performed weapons-clearing procedures. As the Soldier searched for a tool to remove the sight, the squad leader began talking with other company members. The Soldier installed the sight and began looking for his squad leader.

While searching for the squad leader, the Soldier ran into two other Soldiers talking about and practicing knife-fighting techniques with chem lights. The Soldier began walking closer to the other Soldiers because he wanted to join the fun. As he approached, he raised the M4 from the low ready to firing position. He then pointed the rifle at one of

the Soldiers and, in one fluid motion, rotated the selector lever to fire and squeezed the trigger. The Soldier to whom the rifle was pointed was hit in the face with a bullet.

The other Soldiers immediately began administering first aid and called range support and 911. However, different company members called 911 and range support at the same time, causing some conflict in response. The emergency responders also were delayed because of problems getting an accurate description of the situation and the Soldiers' location. The injured Soldier finally was transported by ambulance to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

## Why the accident happened

- The squad leader didn't verify his assigned M4 was cleared of all rounds in contravention of Field Manual 3-22.9, *Rifle Marksmanship M16A1, M16A2/3, M16A4 and M4 Carbine*; Soldiers Training Publication (STP) 21-1, *Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks*; and local installation policies. He then gave the loaded weapon to another Soldier. The squad leader was preoccupied with his leadership responsibilities and forgot to complete his required personal actions.

- The RSO didn't verify Soldiers exiting the range had cleared their weapons in accordance with STP 21-1 and local installation policies, allowing the squad leader to take a loaded weapon back to the assembly area. This failure was due to the RSO's overconfidence in the Soldiers' abilities to verify all weapons were cleared, a lack

# Hey Sir, What Are You Doing?

**ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION DIVISION**  
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of formal local certification training, and improper supervision by the range OIC.

- A Soldier pointed a weapon he believed wasn't loaded at another Soldier and pulled the trigger in contravention of local installation policies. This action was the result of personal indiscipline and overt complacency with respect to weapons handling.

- The company commander, who was acting as the range OIC, allowed procedures violations to happen within his formation. He attempted to simultaneously carry out the duties of observer/controller, OIC, RSO, and commander, but didn't ensure the personnel actually charged with those responsibilities accomplished the required tasks. The commander's actions were in contravention of Army Regulation 385-63, *Range Safety*, and local installation policies. This failure was the result of overconfidence in his abilities to directly influence multiple range procedures simultaneously and his focus on the training's tactical aspects.

## Other observation

There was an unnecessary time lapse in the initial calls for emergency care and confusion regarding the information to convey.

## What can be done?

- Unit training must be improved to ensure weapons handling and clearing procedures are followed and enforced at all times. Positive command action also should be taken to ensure

proper personnel are selected as RSOs and that these individuals understand their duties and responsibilities.

- Commanders must ensure all personnel in key range positions are trained adequately to perform their assigned duties. This includes a review of existing local certification training programs and placing special emphasis on RSO duties and responsibilities.

- Commanders must emphasize how complacency and personal indiscipline can lead to accidents and severe or fatal injuries.

They must enforce all applicable weapons handling procedures and expand unit training programs to overcome complacency and discipline shortcomings.

- Commanders must ensure range OICs understand their assigned duties and responsibilities and conduct effective preliminary marksmanship instruction before every range. In addition, all leaders must understand and practice Composite Risk Management.

- Soldiers at all levels should rehearse the casualty evacuation plan to determine if any shortcomings exist and take measures to correct deficiencies. Seconds can make the difference between life and death for an injured Soldier.

**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](mailto: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 [operationsupport@crc.army.mil](mailto:operationsupport@crc.army.mil).**

**H**ave you ever had an NCO ask you this question? And you replied, "Don't worry, I've got it." Chances are that NCO was trying to tell you something and maybe even offer some assistance. Teaming with NCOs seems like a fundamental practice all officers should follow, but three recent accidents indicate some officers are attempting to perform tasks traditionally accomplished by NCOs. The most recent of these accidents illustrates what can happen when an officer attempts to do it all.

A recent accident investigation revealed the company commander was attempting to simultaneously perform the duties of range officer in charge, range safety officer (RSO), and observer/controller. His divided attention resulted in several procedures violations, including a failure to ensure the actual RSO verified all weapons were clear before departing the range for the assembly area. As a result, one weapon was carried back to the assembly area with a round in the chamber. Later that day, the weapon was handled improperly, and a Soldier was fatally injured.

Although the company commander didn't personally carry the weapon off the range, his actions contributed to the accident. While every Soldier has the responsibility to clear his weapon before departing the range, had the commander teamed with his NCOs in three distinct areas—division of duties, planning, and Composite Risk Management (CRM)—this accident might've been prevented.

## NCOs x (Duties + Planning + CRM) = Combat Readiness

Effective partnering with NCOs provides an efficient and effective division of duties, which allows everyone to pay the correct amount of attention to their administrative, procedural, and leadership activities. Empowering NCOs with authority commensurate to these duties is essential, because it allows them to become

stakeholders in the unit's performance.

NCOs also should be involved in planning processes. Experienced NCOs can contribute immensely during the planning of any operation, from a weapons qualification range to a complicated squad or platoon live-fire maneuver lane. Your NCOs will bring a priceless gift to the planning table—experience. On average, NCOs at the company level have between 4 and 5 years of additional time in service. Officers must allow their NCOs to fulfill their roles in the training plan and enforce the standards.

Finally, NCOs must participate in the CRM process. NCOs have a unique perspective and, therefore, can see things officers often overlook. NCOs can validate tactical hazards and controls, as well as greatly assist in the identification of accidental hazards and development of relevant and actionable controls.

As officers, we like to think we can do it all, but we can't. Your NCOs don't just prepare promotion packets and grade PT tests. Empower and involve them in the planning and execution of training. Their involvement will enhance training value, ensure adherence to standards, and add to your unit's credibility. Finally, involve your NCOs one step further in the CRM process. Their involvement will make the process real and demonstrate to junior Soldiers that CRM is worth doing.

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# Complacency: It's A Killer

It's one thing to say a Soldier died leading his troops in combat or was killed putting other lives before his own. It's another, however, to say a Soldier died because complacency and a lack of standards and discipline were tolerated in his or her unit. In fact, it's downright unacceptable.

Soldiers put themselves and their buddies in jeopardy every time they fail to buckle their seatbelts, wear their helmets properly, or maintain muzzle awareness. No particular issue is more important than another, whether on duty or off, in garrison or in theater. Yet most accidents have at least one or two factors in common: complacency and/or leadership failures.

Leadership and safety can't be separated. We don't practice safety in addition to our other tasks; rather, it's a vital part of what we do. Leaders are supposed to accomplish their missions and take care of their Soldiers. But they sometimes get so wrapped up in the mission part, they forget about the safety aspect.

Leaders must ensure they and their Soldiers conduct all their business in a safe manner. Enforcing correct troop-leading procedures is one way to accomplish this goal. However, leaders must be careful because, if they don't pay attention to what they're doing, they might unintentionally reinforce bad habits. They can't allow themselves or their Soldiers to become complacent. For example, when leaders think they've talked too much about safety or pre-checks, they're complacent. Nothing is routine, and you can't place enough emphasis on safety.

Some Soldiers think being in a combat zone justifies doing things they'd never do in garrison. This attitude is deadly, and Soldiers are dying because of it. Leaders must train their Soldiers to follow proper steps and procedures—without taking shortcuts—on every mission.

It's their responsibility to stop and correct improper behavior when they see something isn't quite right, regardless the mission.

Mission importance and OPTEMPO are easy excuses for taking shortcuts. We must make sure our young Soldiers and leaders don't develop an attitude of "Hey, I'm not going to get hurt. I've done this before and nothing happened." Soldiers and leaders should think about how much time they'll lose if their equipment is completely destroyed or the individuals using it are gone for good, all in the name of saving a little time. The consequences don't justify the means. The last thing anyone wants to do is kill their best friend because they weren't paying attention or because they took a shortcut.

Being a senior leader, I become angry when I hear about Soldiers dying in preventable accidents or because of carelessness. Families back home wake up in the morning and go to bed at night worrying about their loved ones. Their worry is the enemy, but accidents are just as deadly as an improvised explosive device or small-arms ambush. All too often, parents and spouses are told by a casualty assistance officer or chaplain their loved one was killed in a situation that didn't have to happen. There aren't words to describe the devastation—it's just senseless. I've thought about this hundreds of times, and it's always in the back of my mind when I talk with the families of my Soldiers killed in action.

We don't have to accept these losses. The best way we can honor those that have died is to do the right thing and save other Soldiers. Nobody is immune to complacency, and everyone is responsible for safety, regardless their rank or position. We all have the right to wave the red flag when there's a safety problem—in fact, we're obligated to say something! Sometimes we have to go out of our way, but I'd



rather be tired and stop a Soldier from doing something wrong than be wide awake at a memorial service. There are no second chances then.

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# Bored? Don't Do This!

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**S**oldiers who've been in Iraq know all too well boredom and a momentary loss of common sense can result in senseless injuries. Several such incidents involving .50 caliber ammunition have occurred in Iraq in recent months. Although these cartridges might seem like very useful tools or toys, they shouldn't ever be removed from their links—a lesson some of our troops have learned the hard way.

• A Marine was curious to see what would happen if he hit a .50 caliber round's primer with a nail. He found out the nail works very much like a firing pin, with two notable exceptions. First, there's no barrel for the projectile to travel down. Second, there's no ejection port from where the cartridge case can eject safely. The Marine wound up with some serious injuries to his hands and face. Too bad his NCO wasn't

around to tell him how bad an idea this trick really was.

• A Soldier was attached to a Marine unit when he made a similar discovery. He was sitting on top of his tank, tapping a .50 caliber cartridge on the vehicle's structure, just as someone would tap a pencil or pen on a desk in boredom. Pens and pencils generally don't contain a primer and gunpowder, however, and therefore don't explode—but the Soldier's cartridge did and severely injured his hand. Instead of killing his boredom, he just about killed himself.

• Another Soldier noticed a .50 caliber cartridge was jammed in his M2 machine gun. He decided to use a hammer and chisel to remove the round, and an audience gathered nearby. Lucky for them, the cartridge didn't go off. But another Soldier's luck ran out when a metal sliver shot from the gun into his eye and had to be surgically removed. In case you were wondering, a hammer and chisel don't have anything to do with proper weapons clearing procedures.

• This Soldier learned fire will detonate .50 caliber ammunition just as surely as nails, hammers, or hard

surfaces on combat vehicles. It was a blustery winter day, and the Soldier left her sleeping tent for duty but forgot to turn off the heater. A running heater in an empty tent is bad enough, but the Soldier left some books and other miscellaneous flammable items on top of it. The Soldier remembered the heater soon enough, however, when some .50 caliber ammunition stored in the tent began cooking off in every conceivable direction. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the Soldier soon found herself deeply involved in a 15-6 investigation.

In retrospect, these troops probably figured out something the rest of us would find pretty obvious: .50 caliber ammunition should be used only with the correct system as a weapon against the enemy. Ammunition, explosives, weapons, you name it—military stuff isn't there to amuse you. Use some common sense and Own the Edge!

*Editor's note: This article was adapted with permission from its original format in the Spring 2006 issue of Ground Warrior, the Marine Corps' ground safety publication, for use in Countermeasure.*



## Explain this one to your commander...

It was a slow spring day in Afghanistan, just after lunch. A few Soldiers decided to start a friendly football game to break the monotony. Somehow, an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon wound up in an M-Gator, the military counterpart of the small vehicles used by golf course personnel to haul greens-keeping equipment. One of the Soldiers needed a break, so he sat down in the M-Gator. He wasn't able to relax for long, because the M249 started firing multiple rounds that went into a nearby office building. None of the football players were hurt, but a Soldier in the building was hit in the chest and shoulder by the wayward rounds.

# HEAT the Trainer

**CWS MARK GRAPIN**  
**CWS DEAN STOOPS**



*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.*

HEAT 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. Perhaps best of all, the device is easily transportable.

The Army's reclamation yards are filled with the basic elements needed to build a HEAT, and a skillful fabricator and assistant can complete the job in a couple of weeks. These items include a mostly intact HMMWV cut down the cab, a

motor and rotational gearbox, and bulk metal to construct the A-frames, flooring plates, and platforms. The assembly process looks like something from an episode of "Monster Garage," and it's easy to get enthusiastic about the trainer after watching one being built from literally the ground up.

Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) personnel fabricated their first HEAT using snapshots and descriptions from Soldiers who'd seen the stateside prototype. Although the two versions look a lot alike, we had the luxury of improving the original design. It's important to remember, however, that even the best machine is little more than an expensive backyard toy without the application and enforcement of proper tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). Getting the right experts together was one of our biggest challenges, but our well-rounded team defined and honed each element to ensure the trainer replicated real-world events while functioning safely.

There are two objectives behind the HEAT: first, train Soldiers to avoid a rollover; and second, teach them how to survive by executing rollover drills and following the proper procedures for egressing an overturned vehicle. Both objectives

can be met by emphasizing teamwork and developing muscle memory through crew battle drills. This crucial experience allows crewmembers to maintain self-control and overcome fear and panic during an actual rollover.

According to a recent article in an aviation publication, a person who's been "egress trained" has a 250-percent greater chance of survival than an untrained occupant in a water egress emergency. Since the HEAT is based off the program of instruction (POI) used for aviation water egress trainers, this sobering statistic becomes a reasonable expectation for the HEAT.

CFLCC's HEAT POI follows a crawl-walk-run learning process. Commanders can choose between two training options for their units, the first of which is a basic orientation to rollover survival skills. The second option involves intermediate and advanced training in a darkened room or hangar and recreates common scenarios in real-world rollovers such as blocked doors and injured crewmembers that can't get out of the vehicle alone. Other scenarios include underwater emergencies and blasts from improvised explosive devices. The training should be conducted at least once a year.

The HEAT already has made an impact with HMMWV drivers and crewmembers even though it's been in operation only a few months. Soldiers who've been through the training and then found themselves in rollover and egress emergencies in combat have lived to sing its praises. Without fail, these Soldiers say they survived because of the confidence they gained through training. Whether under water or under fire, our Soldiers deserve the best training we can give them.

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**A**s of this issue's publication date, about 250 Soldiers have been severely injured in Army Motor Vehicle rollovers since the beginning of Army operations in Iraq. More than half these Soldiers died from their injuries, about 71 were killed in up-armored HMMWVs, and over a dozen drowned when their vehicles rolled over into water-filled canals or trenches. Although our safety professionals and operations and intelligence communities are working diligently to find a balance between enemy and accidental hazards, we continue to lose Soldiers in rollovers. Mishap reports describing yet another rollover cross our desks at least twice a week.

The aviation community has long known the value of rollover egress trainers or "dunkers," which are used to teach escape skills from an aircraft ditched in water. A stateside safety officer recognized those same skills are adaptable to the ground community and developed the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) to help curb rollover deaths in theater.

The HEAT's genius is its simplicity, and it has several advantages over its water-based aviation counterpart. Basically, the trainer is nothing more than a HMMWV cab mounted to a beefed-up tank engine maintenance stand. An electric motor spins the

# FBCB2: Always Improving

**T**he importance of effective communications capabilities has increased greatly since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, particularly regarding interaction between ground Soldiers and aircrews. The ability to receive intelligence from the air and verification from the ground in real time is just one benefit of a highly mobile communications system. The Army's Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) is one such system paying dividends for Soldiers in theater.

Known in its latest iteration as Blue Force Tracking, FBCB2 features integrated computer hardware and software that forms a wireless, tactical Internet. The system is designed to phase out and replace paper maps and voice radio communications with more secure and timely digital information. A quick overview of the program's development follows.

In the initial phase, information was uploaded from other systems such as the Forward-Area Air Defense Command, Control, and Intelligence System; the Combat Service Support Control System; the Battlefield Combat Identification System; the Guardrail/Common Sensor; tactical operations centers; certain unmanned aerial vehicles; and other Army systems. Warfighting experiments were conducted to verify the system could provide improved tactical decision-making information to Soldiers through increased situational awareness by means of timely battlefield data.

The second phase of development involved enhancing the FBCB2's functionality. This step was performed in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Italy in 2002 while the Army was assisting with NATO peacekeeping missions. The Soldiers there received a detailed picture of their surroundings on a computer information network that tracked

vehicles and displayed their locations on a digital map.

The next phase expanded to collect, integrate, and display a common picture of the area of operations to each user display. Locations and identities of threats such as enemy forces, improvised explosive devices, and impassable roads were correlated and automatically transmitted to each group user and displayed as an icon on the screen. The Blue Force Tracking element includes the linking of sensors, communications devices, aircraft, and weapons into a seamless network using satellites as well as line-of-sight transmissions.

The development of a companion system for international military force partners, dubbed "Coalition Force Tracking," is the latest improvement. In April 2005, the Pentagon's Office of Force Transformation determined use of the interconnected Blue Force Tracking system with the Coalition Force

Tracking system improves operational effectiveness.

Our Soldiers benefit from these joint communications capabilities in many ways, including the proven ability to execute decisive combat operations with greater confidence. This unique command and control capability promises to be a decisive technology for 21st-century warfare that will allow our Soldiers to Own the Edge!

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# Can You Hear Here?

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All Soldiers know the ability to communicate is critical anytime they're on duty, whether in training or in combat. Sometimes, however, they get so wrapped up in their current missions they might forget to take certain precautions that will preserve memories years down the road. Hearing is one of our most important senses, but it's also one of the easiest to lose because the damage is usually subtle and typically occurs slowly over time.

The human ear can take only so much noise before it experiences some sort of damage. Soldiers are at higher risk for hearing injury because of the repetitive nature of their operations, whether they're firing weapons on the range or exposed to gunfire and explosions in theater. It's within this context noise-induced hearing loss injury must be considered. Will you make a personal choice to wear hearing protection now so you can hear your family later?

Most Soldiers have experienced temporary hearing loss at some point, such as after a live-fire exercise. After a few hours or a day or two, however, the "fog" lifts and their hearing gets better. The intensity, duration, and type of noise (continuous, intermittent, impact, or high or low frequency) are important factors affecting how our ears react to and recover from noise exposure. Environmental factors also play a part because noise disperses differently in open air, enclosed spaces, and around reflective surfaces. Other factors determining the severity of hearing injury include distance from the noise source, age, general health, and individual susceptibility to noise exposure.

Fortunately, Soldiers can prevent or reduce most hearing loss simply by wearing hearing protection in noisy areas. Field Manual 22-51, *Leaders' Manual for Combat Stress Control*, identifies blasts, noise, and vibration as key stressors affecting Soldiers and combat readiness. The manual states, "The purpose of good military leadership, discipline, and training is to

bring out the best while preventing the worst." It's these worst-case scenarios we must diligently prevent or reduce by using Composite Risk Management.

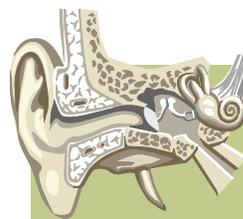
For example, many hearing injuries are caused by multiple exposures to the same noise over an extended period of time. Ideally, the noise source should be reduced, exposure limited, and hearing protection used by all personnel. However, this hierarchy of control can't be applied to every situation, especially in theater. Take small-arms fire, which is loud, repetitive, and in many cases can't be reduced. Therefore, all Soldiers must wear hearing protection whenever possible.

Potential noise exposure should be included in the commander's risk assessment for every mission and take into account unforeseen combat scenarios that might alter the effectiveness of all personal protective equipment, not just earplugs. Likewise, all Soldiers who experience hearing loss—no matter how major or minor it might seem—must report it to their chain of command immediately. Noise thresholds can change depending on the situation and individual, so medical evaluations, personnel rotations, and rest periods must be planned to allow for recovery from temporary threshold shifts.

Some Soldiers might feel their hearing will diminish with age anyway, so why wear earplugs? Most adults do suffer a gradual loss in hearing called presbycusis as they grow older, and little can be done to prevent it. However, it's this very reason why we must conserve as much of our hearing as possible now. Think of it as a hearing "savings account" for the future.

Many Soldiers probably don't think a lot about their hearing until they don't have it anymore. It's the responsibility of leaders at all levels and individual Soldiers themselves to protect not only their hearing, but also their lives. Your future is calling—will you be able to hear it?

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The symptoms of hearing loss include ringing, roaring, or hissing sounds in one or both ears; the speech of others seems mumbled or slurred; difficulty hearing and distinguishing high-pitched sounds such as "s" and "th," in addition to women's voices; difficulty hearing conversations, especially with background noise; and certain sounds seem annoying or overly loud. For more information on hearing protection, visit the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine's Web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/hcp/default.aspx>.



## Common approved earplugs, muffs, and caps:

**Elvex Quatro**—  
NSN 6515-01-492-0443, one size

**Bilsom 655 NST**—  
NSN 6515-01-461-7931, S; NSN  
6515-01-461-7893, L

**Triple Flange**—  
NSN 6515-00-442-4821, S; NSN 6515-00-  
442-4818, M; NSN 6515-00-467-0092, L

**Hand-formed Sound Guard Earplugs**—  
NSN 6515-00-137-6345

**Combat Arms Earplugs**—  
NSN 6515-01-466-2710, double-ended;  
NSN 6165-01-512-6072, single-ended

**Aural Protector Sound Muff, Type II**—  
NSN 4240-00-022-2946

**High Performance Muff, Navy, Type I**—  
NSN 4240-00-759-3290

**Replacement Seal, Dome**—  
NSN 4240-00-979-4040

**Replacement Filter, Dome**—  
NSN 5965-00-674-5379

**Ear Canal Caps, Wilson Model 10**—  
NSN 6515-00-392-0726

**Ear Canal Caps, Aeroa Co. Model**—  
NSN 6561-01-149-4133

**Ear Canal Caps, Wilson Model 20**—  
NSN 6515-01-059-1821

**Earplug Case**—  
NSN 6515-01-100-1674

# Recognizing Excellence in Accident Prevention

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**T**hroughout the Army, Soldiers and leaders are taking bold and innovative measures to reduce the needless loss of lives and equipment through Composite Risk Management. As such, the Army Accident Prevention Awards Program recently underwent some changes to better recognize these contributions. The new program will appear in a consolidated update of existing safety regulations, but in the interim the new policy can be reviewed and downloaded from the Combat Readiness Center's (CRC) Web site at <https://crc.army.mil/awards>.

The renovated program features positive measurements of current Army goals, improved plaques and certificates, and streamlined submission processes. It also allows organizations to develop additional awards tailored to meet their unique accident prevention and recognition goals. The new program is an exciting way to recognize, promote, and motivate accident prevention success.

As you review the awards site, you'll notice our attractive new award plaques. Each has a common design theme that includes a polished metal section beginning at the base and

narrowing to a point at the top. The shape symbolizes a cutting edge that represents the total Army force, melded together for strength, yet sharpened and polished for precision and skill. An individual's place on that edge might be at or near the tip in the theater of operations or at home in training or support activities. Regardless, it's a place where everyone can contribute to mission success while slashing needless losses. Please use the new awards program to Own the Edge!

The following paragraphs highlight new changes to the program.

**Chief of Staff, Army (CSA), Army Headquarters Safety Award.** This plaque is awarded by the CSA to Army commands, Army service component commands (ASCCs), and direct reporting units (DRUs) that have demonstrated significant improvements, sustained excellence, and leadership in accident prevention programs.

**CSA Exceptional Organization Safety Award.** This plaque is awarded each fiscal year to battalion through division and garrison organizations with the most effective overall safety program.

**CSA Individual Award of Excellence for Safety.** This plaque is awarded each fiscal year to individuals who make the most significant contribution to accident prevention in each of four categories: officer, NCO and enlisted, Department of the Army civilian, and contractor.

**Director of Army Safety (DASAF) Composite Risk Management (CRM) Award.** This plaque is awarded by the DASAF to organizations or individuals who have made significant contributions to Army readiness through CRM.

**Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) Superior Soldier Safety Award.** This plaque is awarded by the SMA to Soldiers who demonstrate pockets of excellence or best practices in safeguarding Army operations and personnel.

**United States Army Safety Guardian Award.** This certificate and plaque are presented by the DASAF to individuals who, through extraordinary individual action in an emergency situation, prevent an imminently dangerous situation, injury to personnel, or damage to Army property.

**Army Aviation Broken Wing Award.** This certificate and plaque are presented by the DASAF to individuals who, through outstanding airmanship, minimize or prevent aircraft damage or injury to personnel during an emergency situation.



“The **new** program is an exciting way to recognize, promote, and **motivate** accident prevention success.”



## **Army Headquarters and organization-level awards**

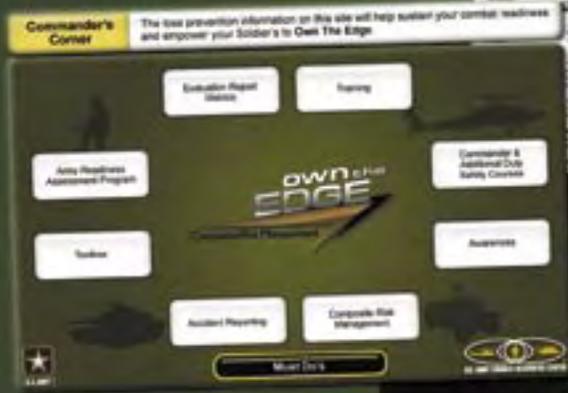
**Army Accident Prevention Award of Accomplishment.** This award is presented by commanders of Army commands, ASCCs, and DRUs to subordinate units for completion of an accident-free year or major exercise.

**United States Army Aircrew Member Safety Award.** This award is presented by commanders to aircrew members for specific periods of accident-free flying.

**Other individual and organizational awards.** Leaders at all levels will recognize the safe performance of individuals and subordinate organizations. Leaders are encouraged to develop awards tailored toward recognizing accident prevention accomplishments within their sphere of activity, interest, or operation. Leaders may use DA Form 1119-1 and are authorized to design and use locally produced certificates and trophies.

**Impact awards.** Commanders are encouraged to develop and issue policies for impact awards to promote safety awareness through on-the-spot recognition of safety-related actions that are above and beyond what is required of an individual or organization.

Anyone with questions or comments concerning the Army's Accident Prevention Awards Program can e-mail the Combat Readiness Center at [safetyawards@crc.army.mil](mailto:safetyawards@crc.army.mil), or contact CW4 Paul Clark by e-mail at [paul.clark2@us.army.mil](mailto:paul.clark2@us.army.mil) or by phone at (334) 255-2443 (DSN 558-2443).



# Introducing 'Commander's Corner'

The Chief of Staff, Army (CSA) recently mandated several initiatives to help leaders in the field manage risk as they fight the Global War on Terror and simultaneously transform our Army. In accordance with the CSA's goal, the Army Combat Readiness Center (CRC) recently established a "Commander's Corner" page on its Web site to assist all levels of leadership in developing strong safety programs. The power of this Web site is its easy navigation to Composite Risk Management (CRM) training, programs, and tools including ASMIS-2 POV, an online planning program that pairs supervisors and subordinates in the risk management process for POV trips. You'll also find information covering quantifiable safety metrics for the DA 67-9-1; digital accident and loss reporting tools; and links to our hard-hitting safety publications, *Countermeasure*, *Flightfax*, and *ImpaX*. The site can be accessed online at <https://crc.army.mil/commanderscorner/index.html>. Two new "Commander's Corner" additions under the "Toolbox" tab are the "CRM Interactive Worksheet Tool" and "Commander's Toolbox" links. The worksheet provides step-by-step guidance for leaders conducting CRM, while the toolbox contains reference materials for every leader and safety professional. Both items also can be found in the "New Tools" section on the CRC homepage at <https://crc.army.mil>.

# And the Winner

Two Soldiers correctly cited the unauthorized modifications to the M1114 HMMWV on page 19 of the March 2006 *Countermeasure*: LTC Jerry Hurtgen Jr., safety and occupational health manager for the Michigan Army National Guard in Lansing, MI, and CPT Eric Coulson, commander of the Army Reserve's A/321st Engineer Battalion in Boise, ID. The photo featured under the caption "A Moving Violation" showed an M1114 HMMWV outfitted with, among other illegal parts, an activated Claymore mine on its bumper.

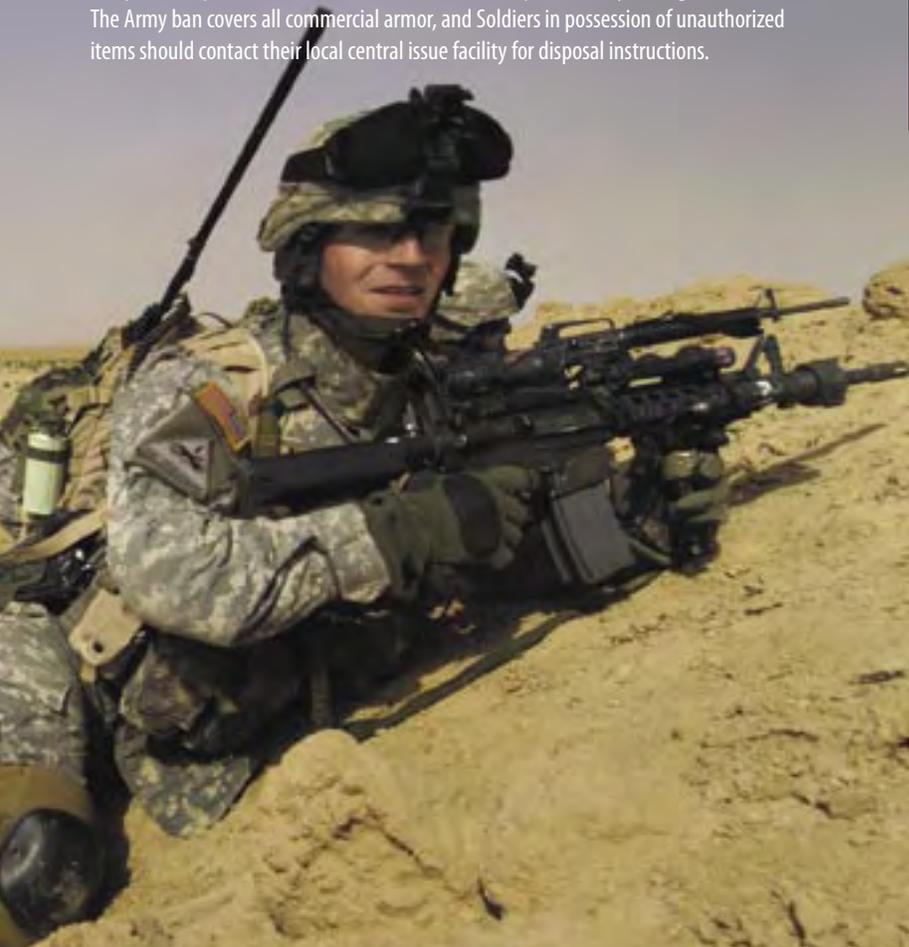
To quote CPT Coulson, "What were they thinking? Please tell me an officer or senior NCO didn't know about that!" The other unauthorized modifications included extra headlights on the vehicle's grill and bumper, which also were unapproved; the tow bar and tow chains that, in addition to the bumper, were locally fabricated; and the driver-side mirror, which had been moved to a lower position.

Anyone with questions regarding this column may contact the editor at (334) 255-1218, DSN 558-1218, or by e-mail at [countermeasure@crc.army.mil](mailto:countermeasure@crc.army.mil).



# Got Commercial Body Armor?

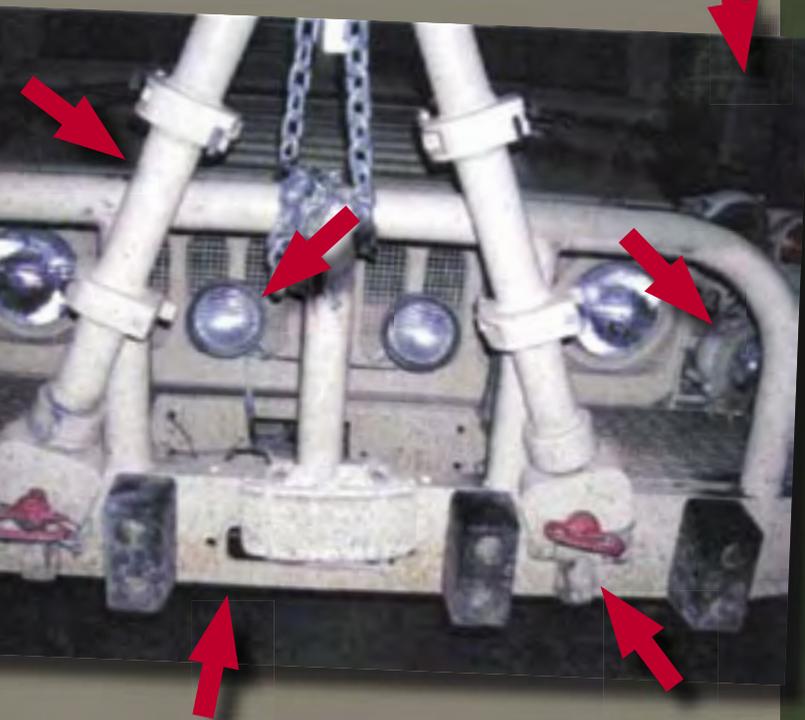
The U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command recently released Safety of Use Message 06-017 prohibiting Soldier use of commercial body armor. The order was prompted by concerns that individual Soldiers or their families were contacting private companies to purchase commercial armor that hasn't passed Army testing standards. The Army ban covers all commercial armor, and Soldiers in possession of unauthorized items should contact their local central issue facility for disposal instructions.



## 'Fort to Port' Video Download Available Now

The first installment of "Letters from War: Fort to Port" is now ready for download. The video covers port operations and can be downloaded from the CRC Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>. Once on the site, click the "Media and Magazines" button; from there, click the "Videos" link; and then scroll down to "Ground Videos." The video, which is for official use only, can be downloaded from the same page. Other installments are in development, and each one will be available for download as they're completed. A final compilation DVD will include deployment topics such as convoy operations, rail and barge movements, and port operations. Anyone with questions regarding this or other CRC video productions may contact Rebecca Nolin at (334) 255-2067, DSN 558-2067, or by e-mail at [video@crc.army.mil](mailto:video@crc.army.mil).

## rs Are ...



## A HMMWV Pocket Protector

The Program Manager, Tactical Wheeled Vehicles recently published a combined safety smart card to help familiarize Soldiers with new equipment upgrades and emergency procedures regarding the M1114 HMMWV. The card includes tips and procedures for equipment such as the automatic fire extinguisher system, single-movement combat locks, emergency rescue wrench, and improved gunner and personal restraint systems, as well as emergency procedures for rollovers and water egress. The card can be found on the CRC Web site at [https://crc.army.mil/tools/gta/m1114\\_combined\\_safety\\_card.pdf](https://crc.army.mil/tools/gta/m1114_combined_safety_card.pdf).





**Class A**

■ A local national suffered fatal injuries when his vehicle was hit by a Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV). The BFV was crossing a main supply route and was unable to avoid the civilian vehicle, which failed to stop at the intersection. No Soldier injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the early morning.



**Class A**

■ One foreign national soldier was killed and another was injured when a U.S. M1070 HET struck them while turning at a checkpoint. The foreign nationals were manning the checkpoint, and the HET was part of a convoy. No U.S. Soldier injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the late evening.

■ A local national was killed when his vehicle struck an M915 truck. The M915 was part of a convoy, and its driver pulled into the local national's path while attempting to change lanes. The local national's vehicle struck the M915 and rolled over. No Soldier injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

**Class C**

■ Soldier suffered fractures to his left arm when the M1114 HMMWV he was riding in struck a curb and rolled over. The Soldier was serving as the vehicle's gunner. No other injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the mid-afternoon.



# Seatbelt Success Stories

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

## Class D

Two Soldiers escaped without injury when their M1027 HMMWV rolled over multiple times down a 50-foot embankment. The Soldiers were positioning the vehicle for connection with a wrecker when the HMMWV's tires hit some rocks and slid toward the roadway's edge, which then gave way under the truck. The HMMWV stopped rolling when it hit a large rock. Both Soldiers were wearing their seatbelts and conducted proper rollover procedures. The accident occurred during the early afternoon.

The crew of an M1114 HMMWV was unharmed after their truck overturned numerous times during a combat logistics patrol. The HMMWV was the trail vehicle in a convoy and had fallen behind the other vehicles. The driver, who had little experience driving the M1114, was trying to catch up with the other vehicles when he approached a turn. Although his VC was telling him to slow down, the driver maintained the vehicle's speed and wasn't able to brake enough to negotiate the turn. The HMMWV went into a skid and rolled over multiple times. All crewmembers were wearing their restraint systems and PPE. The accident occurred during the mid-afternoon.

Two Soldiers were uninjured when their M923 5-ton truck rolled over. The Soldiers were returning from an equipment delivery run when the driver lost control of the vehicle. The truck spun around and skidded off the roadway before overturning, and the impact crushed the hood, cab, and cargo side rails. Both Soldiers were wearing their seatbelts and Kevlar helmets. The accident occurred during the late morning.

One Soldier suffered minor head injuries and another was unharmed when their Bongo truck slid off the roadway and hit an embankment during a rainstorm. The truck, which belonged to the Soldiers' motor pool, hydroplaned after one of its tires blew out. Both Soldiers were wearing their seatbelts, and the truck suffered front-end damage. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

Soldier suffered a serious head injury when the M1025 HMMWV he was riding in overturned into a trench. The Soldier was serving as the vehicle's gunner and hit his head on the vehicle's M249 Squad Automatic Weapon during the rollover. No other injuries were reported. The accident occurred during the mid-afternoon.



## Class A

Soldier suffered a fatal head injury during a combative training exercise. The Soldier fell backward and struck his head on the ground mat after taking a punch from his sparring partner. The Soldier died 2 days later at a local hospital. He was wearing all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including headgear. The accident occurred during the mid-afternoon.

Soldier died after complaining of chest pains while playing basketball during a unit PT event. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

Soldier collapsed and died during an organized

PT street hockey game. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

One Soldier was killed and four others were injured when an 81 mm high explosive round detonated in the tube. The Soldiers were participating in a field training exercise live-fire iteration and were inside the mortar pit when the round exploded. The degree of injury to the surviving Soldiers was not reported. The accident occurred during the late afternoon.

Soldier suffered second-degree burns to his legs when a flare fired inside an M1114 HMMWV. The Soldier was serving as the vehicle's gunner and had placed the flare on the turret ledge in preparation for a possible escalation of force incident. He then inadvertently bumped the flare, which ignited inside the HMMWV. The Soldier was treated for burns and infection over a 2-month period. The accident occurred during the early morning.

## Class B

Soldier suffered total blindness in his right eye after being struck by a chisel while repairing an M1114 HMMWV. The Soldier was using the

Soldier was paralyzed from the waist down after falling from the top of a CH-47 aircraft. The Soldier had climbed on the aircraft to take a hydraulic sample but a rotor blade struck his head, causing the fall. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.



chisel and a hammer to strip some bolts from the vehicle's armor when the chisel fell and struck him in the eye. The accident occurred during the late afternoon.

■ Soldier's right-hand ring and pinky fingers were partially amputated during a vehicle recovery operation. The Soldier was connecting a tow bar to a BFV when he pinned his hand between the bar and the vehicle. The accident occurred during the mid-morning.

■ Two Soldiers suffered third-degree burns to their hands and legs resulting in permanent partial disabilities when a kerosene heater caught

fire. The Soldiers were on duty in a guard tower when the fire broke out, reportedly from improper use of the heater. The accident occurred during the early morning.

### **Class C**

■ 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.



# WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?



## A MILLION-DOLLAR WOUND

In the movie "Forrest Gump," the title hero got drafted, went to Vietnam, and during an enemy ambush, got "bit ... right in the buttocks." He said the Army doctors told him it was a "million-dollar wound" and, although Forrest never saw any of that money, he did get to show his scars off to President Lyndon Johnson. His injured posterior provided some laughs amid the seriousness of combat, but it's not likely the Soldier described below was laughing when he suffered the same injury, only this time by a friendly element.

An NCO was participating in his unit's night live-fire exercise. He'd been on duty for 12 hours with only 6 hours' sleep, and it was just after midnight. The NCO and two other platoon members, including his platoon leader, had just exited their vehicle at a target site. Amid confusion regarding who was supposed to link up with whom at the site, one Soldier became disoriented and started walking toward the fire lanes. To his horror, the NCO saw the other Soldier walking straight into the waiting ambush that, although a pretend scenario, involved very real bullets.

Acting on instinct, the NCO stepped in front of his platoon leader and began walking toward the disoriented Soldier. Unfortunately, he did so without calling "cease fire." It was dark, and as far as the platoon leader knew, everything was going according to plan. The platoon leader fired his M4, but the screams that followed were unexpected. Turns out he hit the NCO with a 5.56 mm round; lucky for the NCO, only his left buttock was affected.

After surgery, 9 days in the hospital, and all the ice

cream he could eat, the NCO reported for light duty and was expected to make a full recovery. His entire unit learned some valuable lessons that night. Among others, stay aware of your surroundings, especially where live ammunition is involved. An Army bullet will kill just as surely as the enemy's. And, in the event of any dangerous situation during live-fire training, make sure you call a cease fire before moving to correct the situation.

## THE DOMINO EFFECT

Have you ever noticed when one thing goes wrong, a whole string of catastrophes seem to follow? One Soldier experienced this "domino effect" during a day live-fire exercise. He'd just finished a gunnery run downrange with his HMMWV crew when the first incident happened.

Dismounting a vehicle shouldn't be challenging, but anything's possible, especially when spent .50 caliber cases are lying around. The Soldier stepped on wayward case, slipped, and went flying through the air. He obviously wasn't maintaining three points of contact before he fell, a mistake he tried to correct—which leads

us to the second event in this chain of disasters.

Where there's empty .50 caliber cases, there's got to be a weapon that fired them. When you've just come off the range, that weapon will most likely be hot. Like something from a bad Wile E. Coyote cartoon, the Soldier grabbed the barrel of the HMMWV's .50 caliber machine gun to steady himself. He found out the barrel wasn't just hot, it was searing. So searing, in fact, he lost 2 days of work for burn treatment.

Lucky for the Soldier, the vehicle wasn't moving at the time. At least he wasn't run over.

**POV stats** Class A-C accidents/Soldiers killed

<b>Cars</b>	<b>79/31</b>
<b>Vans</b>	<b>1/0</b>
<b>Trucks</b>	<b>22/8</b>
<b>Motorcycles</b>	<b>46/14</b>
<b>Other*</b>	<b>1/0</b>

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

**53** FY06 through April 06 **total DEATHS**

**05** FY05: **69** **3** year average: **55**