

ARMY SYSTEMS CENTER  
3151 DOWNS DRIVE  
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# IMD Agent



Army Non-Tactical Risk-Management Information

# This Pub's for You!

BOB VAN ELSBERG  
Managing Editor

**D**o you love to roll on the throttle, dig deep in the turns, and feel the road on a motorcycle? What about driving? Do you enjoy cross-country trips, or do you like shorter jaunts made more interesting by squeezing out every ounce of performance from your car? Is there a favorite team sport you enjoy—possibly basketball, football, or soccer? Maybe you're into something more individual like weight lifting, skateboarding, skiing, or hunting. Do you spend 40 hours a week in a workplace that may be far from combat, but can still deal you a nasty injury if you're not careful? Finally, there's the place you call "home," whether

it's a barracks, family housing, an apartment, or your own house. Wherever you are and whatever you enjoy doing, avoiding painful accidents and injuries is almost certainly important to you. And helping you avoid those unpleasant interruptions to your life is the goal of *ImpaX* magazine.

And just who is the "you" *ImpaX* magazine is seeking to reach? That's an easy question to answer. The "you" is the entire Army family of Soldiers,

family members, and Army civilians—people all vitally linked in the common mission of protecting America. Although the front line in the War on Terror may be in Iraq and Afghanistan, the truth is it also stretches all the way back home to where you live and work. Sometimes that front line is on the highway where you drive and deal with other motorists. Sometimes it's on the basketball court or football field where you're eyeball to eyeball with your opponent. Sometimes it's in your workplace where the real threat is an accident, not enemy action. Sometimes it's in your home, the place you go to relax but where dangers can injure or kill you as surely as an improvised explosive



device. And the truth is, in today's War on Terror your accidental loss is not just a personal issue. If you're not in your place on America's front line against terror, you're effectively a combat loss. But it doesn't have to be that way.

*ImpaX* is all about helping you get the best out of life while you serve your country. Whether you enjoy blasting away at your opponents in a paintball game, clocking the fastest possible times in amateur car racing, spending quality time in your home workshop, or relaxing in the backyard with the "Great American Barbecue," you'll find articles to minimize the scrapes, bumps, broken bones—or worse—that can take the shine off a good time.



## USACRC Protecting Re

**A**s you look at the bylines in this first issue of *ImpaX*, something you won't see is "U.S. Army Safety Center" (USASC). That's because USASC recently transformed to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (USACRC), a reflection of the

expanded role accident prevention plays in preserving combat readiness. While USACRC will continue to investigate Army accidents, it will also report on other losses, to include those from combat, medical causes, and even



criminal activity. The goal is to help leaders as they plan missions to identify and control risks posed by both accidents and the tactical dangers associated with enemy actions.

USACRC's role is to help protect Soldiers and Army civilians wherever they may be serving and whatever their mission. Here, in brief, are USACRC's missions:



You'll also see automotive safety articles including crash test results, vehicle recalls, proper automobile and motorcycle maintenance, driver skill training, new safety developments, and more. With almost everyone either driving a car or riding a motorcycle, "getting there" in one piece is an essential life skill.

*ImpaX* will also be chock-full of true-life stories from the people you rub elbows with everyday—fellow Soldiers, family members, and civilians. And

*ImpaX* wants your story, too! If you want to talk about how you've learned to do your favorite sport or



activity safely and well, why not share that with your Army family? The flip side of that is that we're also open to your close-call or lessons-learned stories. We normally learn more from our mistakes than our successes so why not share the wealth and keep someone else from getting hurt? If you have a tale to tell, please e-mail it to me at **robert.vanelsberg@safetycenter.army.mil**. You don't have to be an experienced writer, I'll gladly work with your story and give you the byline or, if you desire, publish your story anonymously.

This pub's for you! It has been created and designed with you in mind. If you're a member of the Army family



and want to try *ImpaX* on for size, just send your

e-mail request to **sharrel.forehand@safetycenter.army.mil**, or mail your request to: U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center ATTN: *ImpaX* magazine Bldg. 4905, 5th Avenue Fort Rucker, AL, 36362-5363.

Make sure to give us your full mailing address and the number of copies you'd like to receive. And if you're not sure how many copies to request, we suggest one copy for every seven readers in your unit or organization. ✂

**Bob Van Elsberg**  
Managing Editor

**Blake Grantham**  
Graphic Design

**Bob Van Elsberg**  
Managing Editor

**COL John Frketic**  
Deputy Commander

**B6 Joseph A. Smith**  
Commander

*ImpaX* is published by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, Bldg 4905, 5th Avenue, Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363. Information is for accident prevention purposes only and is specifically prohibited for use for punitive purposes or matters of liability, litigation, or competition. Address questions about content to DSN 558-2688 (334-255-2688). To submit information for publication, use FAX 334-255-3003 (Mr. Bob Van Elsberg) or e-mail [robert.vanelsberg@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:robert.vanelsberg@safetycenter.army.mil). Address questions about distribution to DSN 558-2062 (334-255-2062). Visit our Web site at <https://safety.army.mil/>.

## Readiness Through Safety

**BOB VAN ELSBERG**  
Managing Editor

- Provide Army leadership with situation reports on losses within 24 hours of the report arriving at USACRC
- Exercise primary responsibility for the investigation of Army accidents
- Provide coordination on selected combat

- loss investigations
- Create a single entry, multiple-use automated loss reporting system
- Analyze losses and predict trends by using digital technology to research information on losses from a variety of sources
- Support functional

- proponents in developing CRM policy and doctrine
- Develop and implement CRM processes and training Army-wide
- Work with other military services, federal, state, and local agencies to identify best practices and strategies for

- preventing losses
- In short, every loss degrades the Army's combat power, so every loss is worth understanding. This approach is termed composite risk management (CRM), and takes a holistic look at what can hurt or kill Soldiers and Army civilians. ✂



**i**mpacts—twisted steel and mangled bodies. The impacts of a motorcycle, its operator and passenger striking a fence and then the ground at high speed. Impacts—a Soldier near death and another dying. The impacts of their choice to not wear helmets, a choice that made their impact with the unyielding ground even more devastating. Yet these impacts were not the only ones that led to tragedy that night. All too often when people ignore safety, dangerous decisions lead to deadly impacts.

So what happened? Two Soldiers who'd been friends since they'd met in advanced individual training (AIT) were staying with their respective girlfriends, who lived next door to each other. On the night of the accident both Soldiers—we'll call them "Mike" and "John"—met at one girl's home and started drinking hard liquor. After drinking for a couple of hours they decided to go to a local club, so they hopped on Mike's motorcycle and hit the road. Neither of them was wearing a helmet.

After arriving at the club Mike and John socialized with some local patrons for about an hour, by which time both Soldiers were feeling the alcohol's effects.

Just before 11 p.m., the Soldiers' friends decided to leave. Mike and John also thought it would be a good idea to head home, so they followed their friends out of the club. Both Soldiers got on the motorcycle, again without helmets, and followed their friends' SUV out of the parking lot.

As Mike and John traveled down a four-lane road, Mike "popped a wheelie" at about 45 mph and accelerated to more than 90 mph. He went less than a half-mile before going through a "T" intersection, hitting the curb on the far side, and then running into a perimeter fence. Mike and John were thrown from the motorcycle, and both suffered serious head injuries. Fortunately

for Mike, the SUV arrived at the intersection soon after the accident and a passenger called for help. Had it not been for that call, Mike probably would not have lived. John was not so fortunate; he died from his injuries.

While it is true this accident could have been

avoided if Mike had been sober, riding a motorcycle puts even experienced and sober operators at risk. This is why the Army has established policy that requires Soldiers who

## what's wrong with this picture?

If you said "the helmet is locked to the passenger seat," you'd be right. Yes, it is true the windshield is missing and the handlebars, front wheel, and fuel tank are

damaged—all the result of an accident. But the really sad thing is that the

passenger, who should have been wearing that helmet, didn't survive.

Ready!!





**Don't die!**

ride motorcycles to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever they're riding, whether on or off post, and regardless of state motorcycle laws. This policy also applies to civilians who ride motorcycles on post or while on government business off post. Wearing PPE is a requirement, not an option!

Commanders must ensure each leader knows these requirements—especially in states that don't require motorcyclists to wear helmets—and take appropriate action when Soldiers and civilians don't follow the standards. The "Statement of Motorcycle/ATV Operator Requirements and Individual Responsibilities," available

online in the POV Toolbox at <https://safety.army.mil/home.html>, provides those standards. For easy reference, here is a list of the required PPE:

- A helmet certified to meet Department of Transportation (DOT) standards. Helmets must be properly fastened under the chin. If stationed outside CONUS and the host nation does not have an equivalent helmet standard, the helmet will meet the U.S. DOT standard. DOD requires the use of a helmet, even in those states where helmets are not required by state traffic law.
  - Impact or shatter-resistant goggles, or a full-face shield properly attached to the helmet. A windshield or eyeglasses alone are not proper eye protection.
  - Sturdy footwear is mandatory. Leather boots or over-the-ankle shoes are required.
  - Long-sleeved shirt or jacket, long trousers, and full-fingered gloves or mittens designed for use on a motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle.
  - A brightly colored outer upper garment during the day and a reflective upper garment during the night are required.

Outer upper garment shall be clearly visible and not covered. Note: Check with the safety office to get specific state, local, and installation requirements related to reflective equipment.

In addition to the above requirements, riders should also wear shin and knee guards.

## **you're responsible!**

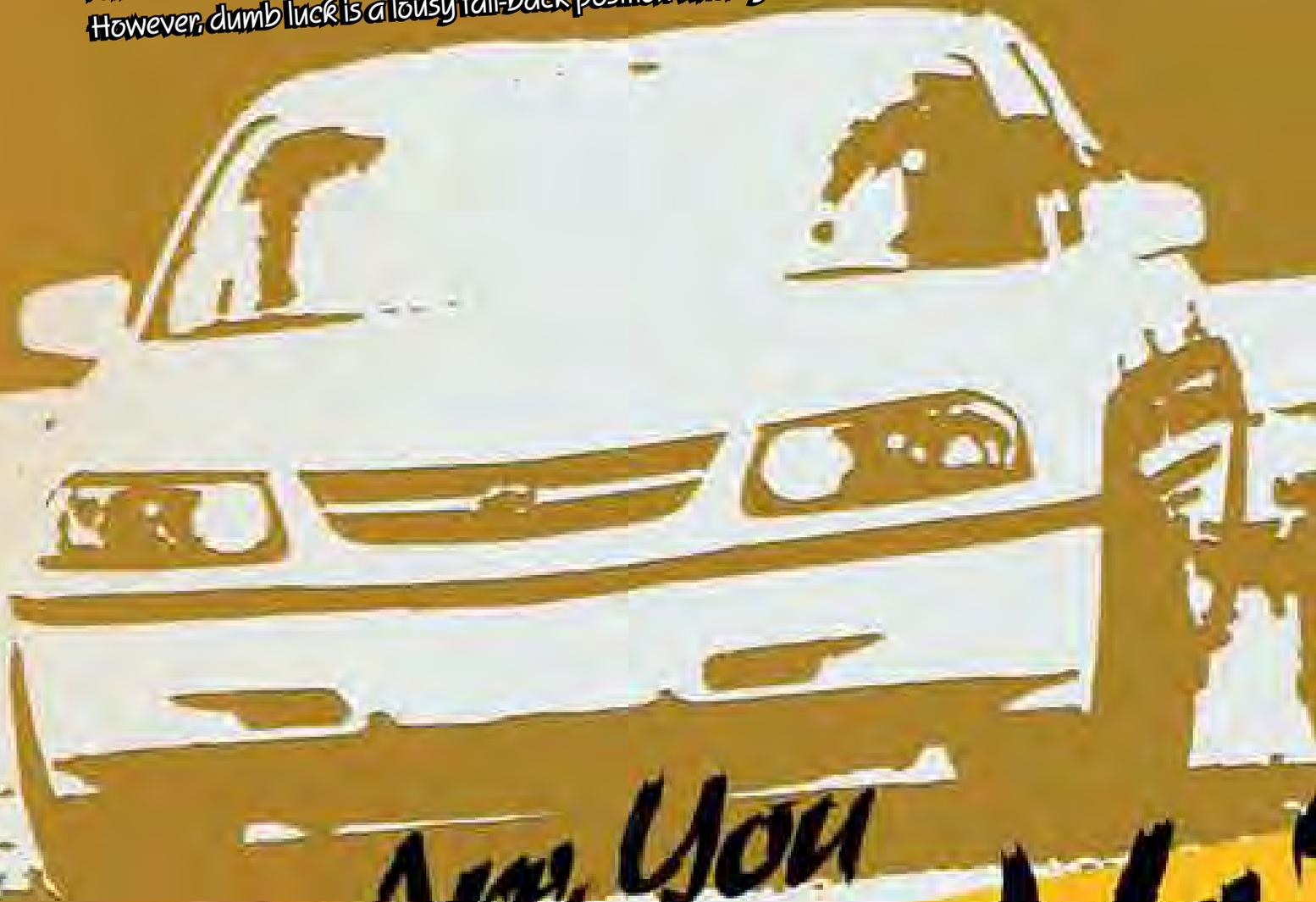
If you fail to get properly licensed or don't wear your PPE and have an accident, you could end up facing some serious consequences. If the investigating officer determines your accident was "not-in-line of duty due to own misconduct," you could end up paying your medical bills. You also could lose your disability or separation pay, along with veteran's rights such as education benefits. Your Servicemen's Group Life Insurance benefit is not in jeopardy and will be paid to whomever you have designated. But will that really replace you to your family and friends? **X**

Contact the author at (334) 255-2256, DSN 558-2256, or e-mail [adamsp@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:adamsp@safetycenter.army.mil).



Road WorX is the section of ImpaX magazine dedicated to stories on driving and automotive safety.

**O**K, I've been driving since I was 17 and conned my granddad into riding with me on my learner's permit. Not once during the 35 years since then have I been injured in an automobile accident. Does that make me a really great driver? Nope, it just means I've had an incredible amount of "dumb luck." Dumb—because I took more chances than I can remember, and luck because I never got turned into "highway hash" in the process. However, dumb luck is a lousy fall-back position when your life is on the line.



Are You  
**Skidding Me?**

BOB VAN ELSBERG  
Managing Editor

If you can't count on luck or living long enough to make every mistake and learn from it, what can you do? For starters, why not give the Army Advanced Skills Driver's Training program a try? You can hone your driving skills while having fun, an occasional adrenaline rush, and

our training. I hate "death by PowerPoint," so I was grateful that part only lasted about 15 minutes. We all eyeballed a screen at the end of the room and watched a computer-generated car doing donuts while trying to round a curve. I smirked and thought, "I've NEVER been that bad!" For the sake of humor John Kolkman, one

bags in the car?" I immediately decided to sit in the back seat. I'd hate to get "surprised" from behind.

## *Parking and backing 101*

We finished the rest of the classroom stuff and headed out to Guthrie Field, where John, two Soldiers, and I piled into a Chevy Impala. The

*Watch Out!*  
**The  
Skid Monster!**



the odd pucker-factor attack. And, wonder of wonders, you get to do this on the Army's dime. I never could resist a "freebie," so I tried it.

It was a chilly morning here at Fort Rucker, Ala., when several Soldiers and I (the only civilian) showed up at the classroom. After a few introductions, we got the PowerPoint part of

of the instructors, then re-ran the event at about 3 x speed.

"You're not going to do that quite as fast—but it's going to feel like it," he said as we all chuckled. It didn't encourage me when John suggested we might want to tell our instructor if we had a problem with motion sickness. I was sitting there wondering, "Will there be barf

first two exercises were pretty tame—parking and backing. Still, I did pick up some good tips on how to back into a parking spot, useful skills I could use at Wal-Mart, especially since my long-bed pickup has the turning radius of a space shuttle.

Next was straight-line backing. John showed us how to focus on an object in the distance ahead as



a reference point, and then watch our rearview mirrors to back up without weaving like a drunk. I'd never done it like that before, but it worked.

### Off-road fun

I've read many reports where drivers let their right-side tires go off the road, panicked, jerked the steering wheel to the left, and then went out of control. I experienced this once myself on the autobahn near Hamburg, Germany. I'd driven all night and was taking a nap in the passenger seat when my wife, who was driving, decided to take a snooze. Our first clue something was wrong was when we heard the plastic highway markers slapping our Volkswagen's front bumper. My wife panicked, swerved to the left, lost control and hit the brakes. I'd never thought of our VW Squareback as being "sporty," but I was amazed how many donuts we did without rolling over as we slid down the autobahn. We stopped on the autobahn facing oncoming traffic which, thankfully, was light that morning. Still, we got a lot of strange looks and interesting gestures from German drivers going by.

We were lucky. A lot of people are killed when they try to swerve from the shoulder back onto the road and go out of

control. As little as a 3-or 4-inch drop-off between the road and shoulder can make getting back on the road tricky.

The drill for this situation was pretty simple. When you go off the road—whether it's with two wheels or all four—let off the gas, look over your left shoulder for any overtaking traffic, then steer smoothly onto the road. John explained it's important to ensure the tires' tread, not their sidewalls, hit the road's edge. Letting the sidewall hit could separate the tire and rim, quickly deflating the tire.

### Just call me "Butter-butt"

I'd seen pictures of the "Skid Monster" device—a set of small wheels replacing the car's normal back tires. The wheels could castor 360 degrees, and word was it could have your car swapping ends like a puppy chasing its tail. For the guys up front, that meant a panoramic view of the local countryside. For the passengers in the back it was like a spinning carnival ride, only much faster. I climbed into the car and started looking for the barf bags. There weren't any.

The first driver handled the course like a master. She rounded the curves, took the 90-degree corners, and stopped as directed—making it

all look easy. Then I climbed out of the backseat and slid behind the wheel. I made a 90-degree left turn at a blistering 2 mph and barely got straightened out before the next stop. Another 90-degree left turn and I was headed toward a sweeping left-hand curve. My grand strategy for getting through that was to keep a little power on going into the turn, then back off and coast as I came around.

Too bad it didn't work. The instant I let off the gas, the car entered a wicked right-hand spin. Between the yells from the backseat, I heard "thumps" as the Chevy flattened several cones. We finally stopped spinning and I slowly drove to the start point to do it over again. I tried to go around the course two more times, but kept spinning out. I felt like someone had coated my butt with butter, sat me on the ground and spun me in circles. Everybody was relieved when I slid from behind the wheel. I was humbled.

### Snakin' and stoppin'

After the Skid Monster we got back into our regular Impala and John drove us to the serpentine course, made of a line of cones spaced 50 feet apart. John whipped through the course forwards and backwards, explaining how to pick up visual cues and turn

# Driving as a Life Skill

JOHN KOLKMAN  
Traffic Safety Program Manager

**D**riving is a life skill. If you're older than 16, chances are you drive some kind of vehicle. However, did you know that approximately 75 percent of all Soldiers who die in accidents do so behind the wheel? And whether that is a privately owned vehicle (POV), Army Motor Vehicle (AMV), or Army Combat Vehicle (ACV), problems with driver skills were tied to 42 percent of those accidents. And things are getting worse. Fatalities in POVs have climbed during the past two years, while deaths in Army vehicles have spiked dramatically during the past four years.

at the right moment. Going forward, you turned when your front wheels passed the cone. Going backward, you turned left or right as soon as the cone appeared in that side's mirror. I did it, so I felt like I'd salvaged a little of my pride from the Skid Monster debacle.

Our next exercise, stopping while avoiding an object, got high marks on my "pucker factor" scale.

"I'm going to do this at 45 mph—but it's going to look a lot faster to you guys," John said with a grin.

He was right. I watched from the front passenger seat as we sped up and headed straight for a bunch of cones set up in a square in the middle of our lane. I was thinking, "OK John, you can slow down now; John, we're getting really close, how 'bout the brakes ... OH CRAP, John, you wanna roll this thing!" My fourth point of contact "vacuum locked" to the seat as the cones all but disappeared from view beneath the hood. John hit the brakes and steered quickly to the right and left to miss the obstacle and straighten the car. We were still right side up. I was amazed.

"That wasn't so bad, was it?" John said, and then added, "It's your turn, Bob."

I didn't want to get up because I was sure there was a hole in the seat cushion. In fact, however, the exercise wasn't so bad once I got behind the wheel. Even at 45 mph the Impala tracked cleanly around the obstacle. I knew the ABS would allow you to brake and steer without losing control, but I'd never put it to quite so radical a test before.

### *Look Ma ... no brakes!*

Sometimes it's easier to steer around an object without braking. Braking shifts your car's center of gravity forward, compressing your front suspension and making it harder to turn sharply. John sped toward the obstacle—a line of cones directly across our path—and tried dodging it with and without brakes. With brakes, the car's front end dove and plowed through several cones. Without brakes, the car neatly steered around the obstacle. When I tried it, I was surprised the front tires didn't break traction. Staying off the brakes allowed the car to more evenly distribute the forces of the sudden turn. It makes sense if you

think about it, but you need to experience it to see how it works.

### *Bottom line*

When I got done with this course, I was surprised at how much I learned. I was forced to handle emergency maneuvers at speeds I would never have tried in the family car. Because I had a professional instructor, I tried some emergency maneuvers I wouldn't have on my own, and learned to do them properly. I'd thought 35 years of driving had effectively prepared me for anything on the road, but I learned that was wrong. And if this "old dog" could learn some new safe driving tricks, could there be something in this training for you? ✕

**For information on this program contact Mike Evans at (334) 255-2643, DSN 558-2643, or e-mail [Mike.evans@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:Mike.evans@safetycenter.army.mil)**

Help is on the way. The Army Driving Task Force (ADTF) is working to help you drive safely whether you're behind the wheel of a BMW or a Bradley. The article you just read describes the Advanced Skills Driver's Training (ASDT) program, a hands-on education tool to improve driver skills. And while those skills are oriented toward driving your POV safely, many of

those same skills can be applied to driving tactical vehicles. The ultimate goal is to establish ASDT programs at several Army installations so more Soldiers can receive this training.

Another tool is the Accident Avoidance Course (AAC), which forms the foundation of the Army's driving programs. A prerequisite for taking the ASDT, the course ensures

driving safety education and regulations are standardized across the Army. Because so many Soldiers need this training, it is being provided online by many Army commands on their intranet pages.

The Army Safety Management Information System-1 (ASMIS-1) risk assessment tool has been around for nearly a year. A Web-based tool that can be accessed at <https://safety.army.mil/home.html>, it gives Soldiers and their leaders a way to

measure POV travel risks, especially when that travel involves long trips.

The Army has recognized that safe driving is a vital life skill and is committed to providing innovative, effective training to develop that skill in Soldiers. ✕

**For more information on these programs contact the author at (334) 255-3660, DSN 558-3660, or e-mail [John.Kolkman@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:John.Kolkman@safetycenter.army.mil)**



**D**ave came home from the depot really excited. He couldn't wait to share the great news with his wife and kids. He was selected for the supervisory position on Line C, the vehicle rebuild line. At last he would be making the long-awaited move into management. The promotion would bring a welcome salary increase, as well as a multitude of new responsibilities.

While slightly overwhelmed by the prospect of his new tasks and responsibilities, the timing of his promotion couldn't have been better. The depot's training for new supervisors was scheduled to begin on Monday. After attending the training class, Dave would move into his

new position the following week.

Dave arrived at the training class on Monday morning, ready to learn all about his new supervisory responsibilities. He quickly looked over the course outline: performance standards, performance appraisals, union interface, equal employment opportunity, and safety responsibilities. Wait a minute—safety responsibilities? Dave never had paid much attention to safety, except for the routine safety inspections or mandatory training classes conducted by the safety office.

# My Responsibilities

As Dave settled into his seat on the second morning of class, the depot safety manager was just getting ready to start her presentation. Dave opened his notebook and listened intently. The presentation focused on four key supervisory safety responsibilities.

- **Provide a workplace free of recognized hazards.** The Code of Federal Regulations specifies that supervisors must provide a workplace free of hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm. Although the code only describes serious hazards, a good supervisor will ensure all hazards are addressed so employees can focus on their job. It is the



supervisor's responsibility to ensure their employees are not exposed to undue risk. As the presentation continued, Dave decided that being a hands-on supervisor would afford him plenty of opportunities to identify potential hazards.

- **Comply with standards.** Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other

regulatory standards. Supervisors also must comply with specific Army and installation safety regulations. OSHA standards also apply to work on military installations. To fulfill their responsibilities, supervisors must build a good working relationship with the safety office, which can help them understand the specific personal protective equipment, training, and operating requirements needed to meet the standards. Standard operating procedures and job hazard analyses are a good start toward satisfying this responsibility. These documents clearly identify the equipment and procedures required to complete the job safely. Supervisors must emphasize the importance of fully understanding and following the established safety procedures.

- **Take action to correct hazards.** Identifying hazards is only the first step; supervisors must also take positive action to correct the hazard. Supervisors need to recognize that their employees are the best source for identifying hazards. Likewise, employees typically have the best ideas for mitigating those hazards. However, supervisors must remember that they cannot initiate or support any reprisal action against an employee who raises a safety issue. Instead, they need to be supportive of employees who identify safety concerns and work with them to mitigate the hazards and address their concerns.

- **Investigate accidents.** Supervisors are responsible for investigating all minor accidents and incidents within their work area. They must report all accidents to the safety office, which is available to assist the supervisor with investigating the accident and completing the required reports. For more serious accidents, the safety office will lead the investigation effort. Near-miss information provides a great source for lessons learned and affords the supervisor an opportunity to prevent future occurrences. The safety manager cautions supervisors that information gained during accident investigations can be used for accident prevention purposes only.

As the safety presentation wound down, Dave was busy thinking about his new responsibilities. As a supervisor, he would be trusted with his employees' safety—a responsibility that must be taken seriously. Dave decided to begin his introductory meeting on Monday with two important points: that he cares about his employees' safety, and that he will fulfill his responsibility to help them get the job done safely. ✕

Ms. Jervis is a safety engineer in the AMC Safety Office, Fort Belvoir, VA. She may be contacted at (703) 806-8706, DSN 656-8706, or by e-mail at [susan.jervis@us.army.mil](mailto:susan.jervis@us.army.mil).

# Ability?

SUSAN JERVIS  
Army Materiel Command  
Fort Belvoir, VA



It couldn't have been a more picture-perfect day. The snow was packed nicely, the sun was shining, and the wind was barely blowing. I couldn't imagine better snowboarding conditions.

# My First Snowboard

AME3 DAVID BERBER, VFA-27  
Reprinted courtesy Ashore



Being from southern California, I considered this setting at a ski resort in Japan's Gumma Mountains a real treat. I possibly was the most eager, over-confident person in this MWR-sponsored event. My sense of adventure had thrown me into a state of confidence that was far too high for my first time snowboarding, especially since I didn't have any training. The people on the slopes made it look easy. I knew I could master it quickly too.

I grabbed the first lift I saw, ignoring the signs that told me which slopes were for experts and which ones were for beginners. I didn't really ignore the signs—I simply couldn't read them.

They were printed in Japanese, which I couldn't understand. Even if I could have read them, I still might have grabbed the first lift because I thought, "How hard can this be?"

On my first slide I went only 5 feet before falling on my back. "A good technique to build up for the steep slope," I thought. I continued these small bursts until, after five or six trial runs, I felt ready to advance a little. I'd gone about 15 feet when I decided I was going too fast. I tried to fall, but the momentum was too great. The braking method that had served me well on the short bursts didn't work at this speed. I kept going forward and eventually went into a cartwheel. After a few tumbles, I came to rest on my back.

"My sense of adventure had thrown me into a state of confidence that was far too high for my first time snowboarding."

# boarding Trip

# The Jacka P

"The snowboarding is too extreme for me," I concluded as I separated my boots from the snowboard and tried to walk out of the path of the skiers and other snowboarders. I immediately felt a sharp pain in my ankle that stayed with me as I made my way to a restaurant at the bottom of the first hill. The pain and deep snow eventually forced me to crawl.

My original idea was to rest an hour at a nearby restaurant and let the pain subside, and then try an easier activity. I quickly realized, however, that the pain wasn't going to go away. I also realized that I needed help getting to the main facility at the base of the ski resort. You can imagine the difficulty I had in making the Japanese patrons understand my plea for help.

Luckily, one of the emergency crewmembers spoke English and agreed to take me to the main facility on a sled. Once I got there the Japanese doctor on duty offered medical attention, but I refused. I didn't think I was injured seriously.

I endured the pain until I reached the Atsugi Naval Air Facility 14 hours after the mishap. By then the intense pain convinced me I needed medical attention, so I went to the local Army base.

There the doctors found I had a broken ankle at the base of my tibia. Surgeons operated on me, using two screws to repair the damage. I then spent four weeks on convalescent leave, confined to my bachelor enlisted quarters room. I also spent several weeks on light duty before returning to my shop, ready for full activity.

I should have taken more precautions, especially when I didn't have any training in snowboarding. Hindsight, however, is always 20/20. ❄️

Planning a first-time ski trip this winter? Want to garner a lot of attention and sympathy while wearing a cast on your leg and propping it upon a footstool in front of a roaring fire? Here are some surefire ways to make your first ski trip a disaster.

## Before Beginning...

Reprinted courtesy the National Safety Council

### Getting prepared

A beginning skier or snowboarder should get proper instruction from a certified instructor before hitting the slopes. Among other basic skills, it is necessary to know how to fall down and get back up. At the start of the season, even an experienced skier or snowboarder should take a refresher course—just to be safe.

After you have mastered the basic skiing or snowboarding skills, the learning process is not over. Knowing the snow conditions and the time of day you are planning to

ski are just as important. Check the snow conditions with the local ski patrol and study a map of the area where you will be skiing or snowboarding. Keep in mind that late in the day sunlight may obscure terrain details and make obstacles hard to see. One of the most important safety rules is to never ski or snowboard alone!

### Rules of the slopes

The following is a list of rules that all skiers and snowboarders should know and obey:

- When skiing or snowboarding downhill,

give moving skiers and snowboarders below the right-of-way. You should be able to see them; they might not see you.

- Stop on the side of a run, well out of the way and within view of other skiers and snowboarders.
- Look both ways and uphill before crossing a trail, merging, or starting down a hill.
- Use a safety device to prevent runaway equipment.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.
- Follow all posted signs and rules. Avoid closed trails and out-of-bounds areas.

# Ess Guide to Skiing

Adapted from Safetyline, December 1995

**Don't take any lessons.** Anyone can teach themselves to ski. Don't bother learning how to fall so that you don't hurt yourself, or how to get up afterwards. You'll figure it out—just get out there and “wing it.” As long as you've got all your rental equipment and look good in your ski outfit, you'll do just fine. Just watch your friends and try whatever they do.

**Pick a day when the snow has a slick, icy finish.** This is called “corn snow” because the surface looks like giant kernels of corn. Even though it gives about as much cushion as asphalt, you can go very fast on it and you'll look really impressive. Don't be a wimp by waiting to ski after a fresh snowfall, when the snow is softest and will cushion your fall. Slushy snow is also good because you can dig in your skis and do sudden stops. Of course, your skis might be the

only things that will stop!

**Pick the most advanced slope you can find.** If you're going to get hurt, make it worth the ski patrol's time. Besides, it's embarrassing to tell people you got hurt on the bunny slope. Give them a story worth listening to—tell them how you tumbled 200 feet down a really difficult run.

**Make sure you drink plenty of alcohol.** This way you can be limber while tripping over your skis on even the simplest trails. Also, the booze will give you the courage to tackle slopes you'd never try if you were sober.

**Keep an eye on other skiers, especially the one 20 feet behind you wearing the latest fashions.** If you do this you won't be distracted by obstructions such as trees, boulders, drop-offs, and other skiers popping up in front of you.

**Pick a narrow trail that's lined with lots of trees.** The trees are good for breaking your fall or stopping you on a downhill run, especially since you don't know how to use your skis to stop. If you can't find a trail with enough obstacles, just veer off through the trees. You won't be disappointed!

**Pause in the middle of a run or just below a ridge on a slope.** This will provide you with several opportunities to meet other skiers as they demonstrate how to run

over deadwood skiers like you. You may also pick up some new, colorful language.

Use ski lifts like the swings they really are. Don't bother to lower the restraining bar. And while you're up there, swing your legs back and forth as hard as you can. Once you get good, you'll be able to execute a double flip off the lift.

**Let your buddies talk you into making a jump on your first time out.** If they say “it's easy” you can believe them—especially if you've all had a few pre-slope warm-up drinks. If you decide to do this, make sure somebody has a camcorder. You just might just be the feature shot for the evening news.

If you're careful to follow this advice, sooner or later you will end up in the prone position on the slopes. If you think that moving will aggravate your injury, then don't stay put or send someone for the ski patrol. Just make your way down to the lodge on your own. That way you can take full advantage of your health insurance. If you're mobile, go to the first aid station for ice and advice. The ice will be great for cooling your after-ski drink. The advice, of course, you can just ignore. After all, you've just read all you need to know! ❄️

# first snow

D. ROCKWELL  
Safety Intern

It was an early morning in November when the snow started falling at Fort Drum, N.Y. Soldiers and civilians alike felt certain the garrison commander would release them early because the snow was falling at nearly 2 inches per hour. By noon the snow was at least 6-inches deep and coming down even harder.



As the snow continued falling the muttering began, “What’s wrong with the head shed?” “When is he going to let us go?” Finally at 3:30 p.m. with more than 14 inches of snow blanketing the ground, the word came down to “release all Soldiers and employees.” As I drove the six miles to my quarters, I counted 26 vehicles either stuck on the road or that had skidded off the side. It was like bumper cars at a county fair.

Many Fort Drum families live in small military communities as far as 32 miles from post. Commuting requires spending a lot of time in all kinds of weather, including the 180 inches of snow we average each winter. Almost 75 percent of Soldiers and dependents are southerners and many, if not most, have never seen snow. Since the reactivation of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) in 1987, “First Snow” is an event watched for by the locals with a mix of trepidation and some humor.

Certainly the extreme

weather conditions at Fort Drum pose significant risks. What are some commonsense procedures and techniques we should use to prepare for winter driving? Let me list a few:

1. Always wear your seatbelt!
2. If you don’t have to go somewhere, then stay off the roads!
3. Stock up with the necessities. Fill the pantry and fridge when you hear a storm front is headed your way.
4. If you must travel, be sure to call local law enforcement. They have up-to-date information on traffic conditions, road closures, and accidents. Check the radio or tune in to “The Weather Channel.” You’ll hear local bulletins giving you recommendations on travel. Listen to that advice because it is vital information!
5. Don’t use cruise control on icy roads. Having to tap your brakes before you can slow down can cause you to skid.
6. Never warm-up your vehicle in a garage, unless the garage door is open. Remember the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.
7. Always tell someone

where you’re going and carry a cell-phone—just don’t talk on it while you’re driving! This is a standard operating procedure with the locals because it works. They always inform someone of their destination, route, and arrival time.

Besides the tips listed above, prepare your family’s vehicles. Ensure you have warm clothing and a blanket in case of an emergency. Your emergency kit should include a good scraper, a small shovel, gloves, and a small bag of traction-improving material such as sand or kitty litter. These should be carried along with the year-round equipment you should already have—a flashlight with extra batteries, protein bars, and an emergency sign. Stay on top of your vehicle’s maintenance. Check your vehicle’s heating and defrosting systems, tires, battery, ignition system, brakes, lights, exhaust, and coolant. Make sure you have plenty of antifreeze-type window washer fluid and keep the gas tank at least half full.

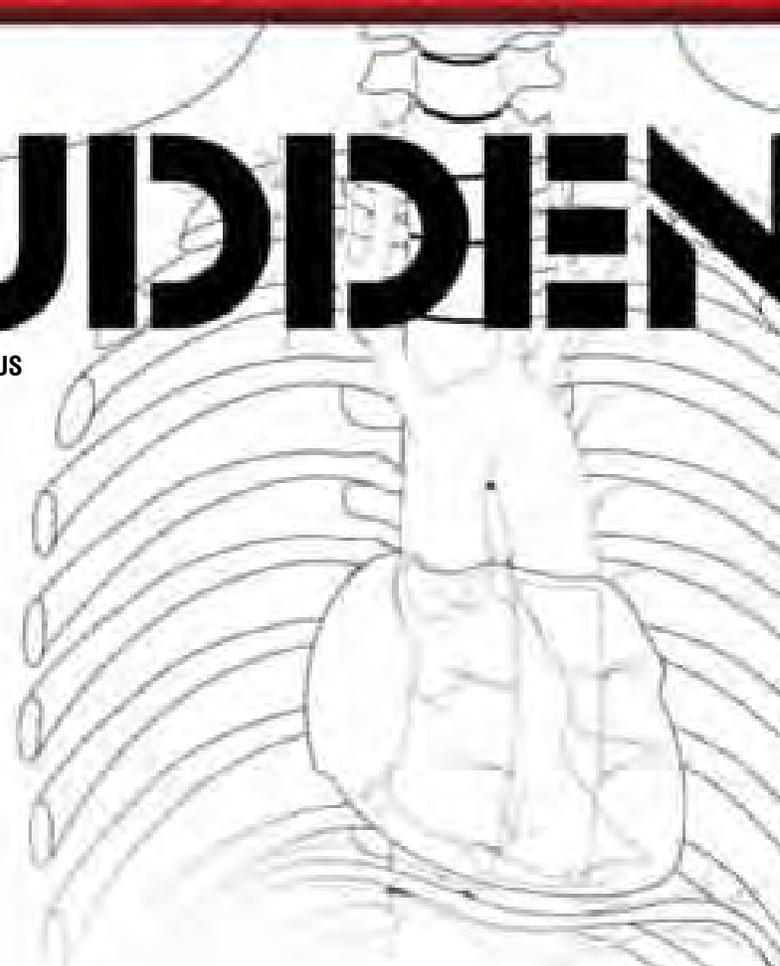
Driving on ice and snow is challenging. Prepare yourself, your family, and your vehicles in advance and always stay aware of weather conditions. Drive safe so you can be here for the next “First Snow”! ❄️

Contact the author at (315) 772-5352, DSN 772-5352, or e-mail [david.rockwell@us.army.mil](mailto:david.rockwell@us.army.mil).



# SUDDEN

ANONYMOUS



I think everybody in the Army has heard about how many privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents and fatalities we've been having. A decade ago I was an Army POV accident statistic who nearly got himself into the fatality column. Let me share what happened to me one night in November 1994.

I was 22 years old at the time. Like most young adults, I wasn't too concerned about safety or the law. All I was concerned about was having enough money to go out on the weekends and to pay what few bills I had.

Anyway, it was a Sunday night and I and a couple of friends decided to go to a local

nightclub. The club was about five minutes and normally had some kind of entertainment on Sunday nights. I was glad my friend had decided to drive because I didn't want to get a DUI. That would be too costly because I could lose one of my most precious items—my car. It was cold that night. The snow from a couple of

days earlier had melted and the roads had been cleared.

We went to the club and had a few drinks. It was around midnight when we decided to leave. I don't remember how much my friend, who was driving, had to drink because I wasn't paying attention. We'd driven the same route home several times during the past two years, so



The human body is amazingly resilient and can survive rapid stops

producing up to 50 Gs (50 times your normal weight). However, impacts producing 30 Gs or more often can cause damage to internal organs as they slam

forward inside the chest cavity. By controlling a driver or passenger's forward movement during a crash, shoulder belts help prevent these injuries.



# IMPACT

I didn't think much could happen to us.

We were about a mile from our apartment and going 40 mph as we approached a curve with a 35 mph speed limit. Normally that wouldn't have been a big deal, but we hadn't thought about the road conditions that night or that the highway department had spread sand on the road. As we got into the curve the car slid off the road, struck a tree, and then hit a telephone pole head-on. I wasn't wearing my seatbelt, so I hit the dash and windshield.

After the crash I looked around inside the car. No one seemed to be badly injured, although I'd gotten some glass in my eye and elbow. The cuts in my elbow would require stitches,

but that was all that seemed to be wrong. I also noticed my chest was hurting. I figured hitting the dash as fast as we were going would cause that, so I wasn't worried.

Once the ambulance arrived I was taken to the hospital to have my cuts treated. I remember being in the emergency room after receiving my stitches. The doctor was trying to figure out what would cause my chest to hurt. He had X-rays done to look for broken ribs, but nothing showed up. He advised the nurse to do an arteriogram, which was not a fun procedure.

I knew something was wrong when everybody started getting serious and several other people began showing up. I was told I had torn my aorta, an injury that would require open heart surgery. I was definitely shocked, as was my family. I was told if the surgery wasn't done properly I could end up paralyzed—or worse.

Needless to say, the surgery was a success.

It took me a long time to fully heal, and I almost lost my Army career during the process. However, I didn't walk away from this accident empty-handed—I gained from it some important lessons learned.

First, always wear your seatbelts. When a car crashes there are three collisions: the car with the object; you with whatever stops your movement inside the car; and your internal organs as they impact each other and your skeleton. That last type of impact, like the one I took to my aorta, is much worse when you're unrestrained and thrown about violently. There's also not much point in having a designated driver if you don't make sure he's not going to drink and drive.

Finally, it's important to think before you get on the road. Doing a little safety planning BEFORE you drive goes a long way, especially when something as important as your life is at stake. ✖



# Smoke gets in your

## gets in YOUR

BOB VAN ELSBERG  
Managing Editor

**Ah—it was winter again—the third in our first home. Always anxious to entertain, my wife had invited friends over that evening for a party. As I thought about the evening, it occurred to me what better way to set the mood than to have a nice cozy fire in our fireplace?**

I grabbed a load of wood from our backyard and stacked the pieces on the grate inside our fireplace. Carefully aligning the pieces so the fire would burn evenly, I slid a fire starter brick beneath the grate. Remembering how I'd smoked us out of the house the previous year when I'd forgotten to open

the flue, I checked and made sure it was open.

Looking at the clock, I saw our guests were due in 45 minutes. I figured by the time they arrived

I'd have the fire going nicely. I lit the fire starter brick and watched as the well-seasoned oak caught nicely. Everything was perfect—for about two minutes. Suddenly, my eyes began watering and I started choking. The ceiling of my front room was beginning to look like the Los Angeles skyline on a smoggy afternoon.

Concerned I might have been mistaken about the position of the flue or perhaps had accidentally closed it; I went to the fireplace and checked it again. Hmm...the

flue was open, so what could be the problem?

By now my wife had opened all the windows in the front room and dining room. All three smoke detectors were raising an earsplitting clatter, sending the family cats into hiding and making me wish I had earplugs.

The longer the fire burned, the worse the smoke got. There was nothing left to do but get a bucket of water and douse the flames. I opened our front door, then went to the back door and opened it,



Most people who die in home fires succumbed to smoke inhalation long before any burn injuries occurred. If you

find yourself in a smoke-filled room, get down on your hands and knees and crawl to an exit. The air is better down near the floor.



## Whether you simply enjoy the occasional fire, or use your fireplace to heat your home, here are a few useful tips.

Have your chimney inspected by a certified chimney sweep at the start of each heating season. If you typically use the fireplace more than four times per week or use soft or green woods, have your chimney inspected more often.

Keep animals out and sparks in with a chimney screen.

Don't use flammable liquids to light or stoke a fire.

To reduce creosote formation, use well-seasoned hardwoods.

Never burn pine boughs or paper because burning particles can float out of the chimney and onto the roof.

Keep flammable items such as papers, blankets and pillows at least 3 feet from the fireplace

Ashes should be removed only in a metal container.

Read the instructions before lighting an artificial log. Used incorrectly, these logs can burn unevenly and release abnormal levels of carbon monoxide.

Don't overload your fireplace. A roaring fireplace can overheat your walls or roof and lead to roaring inferno.

Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure the fire is out before you go to bed or leave the house.

To avoid having sparks fly out of the fireplace, use a sturdy screen made of metal.

Cut the branches of overhanging trees back so they're at least 10 feet from the top of the chimney.

Keep a fire extinguisher handy and know how to use it.

setting a large fan in the doorway. I was hoping to draw out the smoke and silence the detectors before our guests arrived.

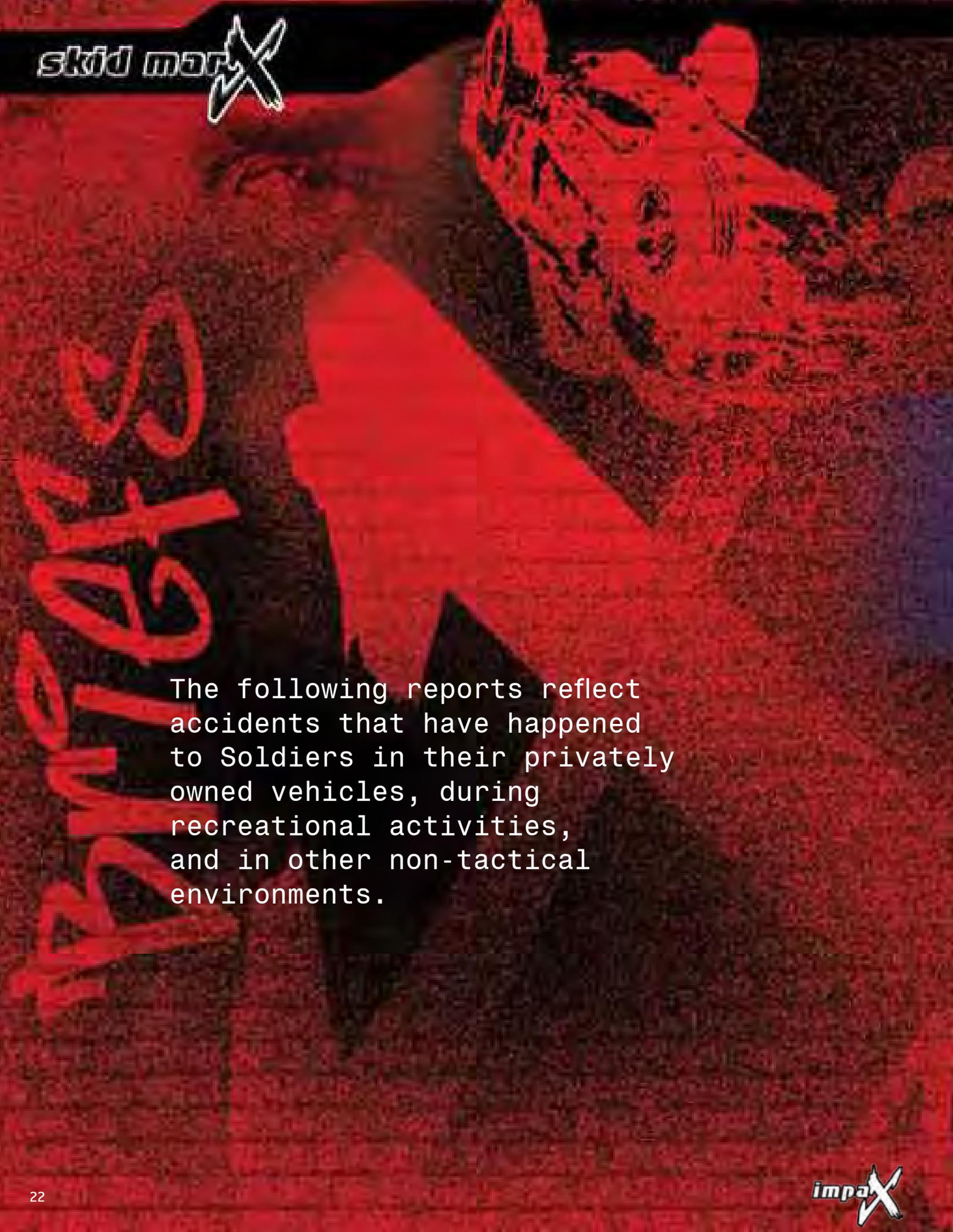
No such luck. They stepped in, took one whiff, and decided we needed to reschedule our party. Our evening plans had literally gone up in smoke.

As it turned out, the culprit was our chimney. Two years of winter fires—some fueled with less-than-well-seasoned wood—had built up enough creosote to seriously block the chimney. I turned to "C" in the Yellow Pages and found out there really were such things as "Chimney Sweeps." Somehow I'd thought they were just interesting little wood figures with top hats and black coats

that we put on our fireplace mantle.

We made a phone call and the chimney sweep arrived at the appointed time. He didn't have a top hat or a black coat, but he did have a machine resembling a Roto-Rooter on steroids. He ran the cleaning brush up our chimney and we were amazed to see how much soot came out. As we handed him a \$50 check, he smiled and explained why you can still find "chimney sweeps" in the phone book. Yes, even in this modern day and age, chimneys still need cleaning. 

Contact the author at (334) 255-2688, DSN 558-2688, or e-mail [robert.vanelsberg@safetycenter.army.mil](mailto:robert.vanelsberg@safetycenter.army.mil).



The following reports reflect accidents that have happened to Soldiers in their privately owned vehicles, during recreational activities, and in other non-tactical environments.

## POV

### Class A

- Soldier died when he lost control of his motorcycle, hit a curb and a parked car, and was thrown head-first from the bike. No other details, including whether the Soldier was wearing his helmet, were reported.

and back when their sport utility vehicle ran off the roadway and overturned. The deceased Soldier, who was driving, had driven more than 500 miles to visit relatives with only five hours of sleep before the accident. Also, the Soldier reportedly had been drinking the evening

Soldier was killed when his vehicle overturned on an interstate off-ramp. The Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt and was ejected from the vehicle.

- Soldier died after being struck by two consecutive vehicles on a highway. The Soldier was running along the highway when he was hit by the first vehicle; before that vehicle's driver could assist the Soldier, another vehicle struck him.

- One Soldier died and another Soldier suffered fractures to his arm, wrist,

of the accident. The accident happened about 30 to 35 miles from the deceased Soldier's residence. The deceased Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt and was ejected during the rollover sequence. The injured Soldier was wearing his seatbelt and was treated at a local hospital. The accident occurred during the early morning hours,

and fog was present on the roadway.

- Soldier suffered fatal injuries when his vehicle was struck by a tractor-trailer at a highway on-ramp. The truck struck the Soldier's vehicle on the passenger side while attempting to avoid a tractor mower that moved from the median into the truck's path. The Soldier died the day after the accident at a local medical facility.

- One Soldier was killed and another injured when their vehicle became airborne and struck three other vehicles. The two Soldiers reportedly were traveling at more than 90 mph in a 45 mph zone and lost control while trying to avoid another car that had pulled out in front of them. The Soldiers' vehicle became airborne after it struck a median, flew into the air and hit the roof of a minivan on the opposite side of the road, and finally struck two additional vehicles before stopping. The

deceased Soldier was driving, and one civilian driver also was killed. The passenger Soldier and two other civilians suffered minor injuries.

## Personal Injury

### Class A

- Soldier suffered a spinal fracture, resulting in a permanent total disability, when his all-terrain vehicle overturned on top of him. The Soldier was attempting to negotiate an incline when the vehicle rolled, pinning him underneath it. The accident occurred during the early morning hours.

# TOP 17

**#2** This Pubs for You!

**#3** USACRC-Protecting  
Readiness Through Safety

**#4** Ready, Set, Die!

**#6** Are You Skidding Me?

**#8** Driving as a Life Skill

**#10** My Responsibility?

**#12** My First Snowboarding Trip

**#14** The Jackass Guide to Skiing

**#16** First Snow

**#18** Sudden Impax

**#20** Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

**#22** Briefs



# Next

- In a Galaxy...
- Too Late for Sorry
- SGT Near Miss