



impact

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Army Non-Tactical Risk-Management Information

Submitted for your approval ... A man with a snowboard enters a ski run, ignoring the "Closed" sign. After ducking under the rope, he straps on his snowboard and pushes off. As he streaks down the mountain, little does he know that he is about to take a leap into The Twilight Zone."

And so our story begins ...

It was early in the season, right after Christmas, and our snowboarder, Kevin, was getting ready for a giant slalom race. On the slopes, huge snowmaking machines sprayed new powder to cover the snow that had thawed the previous day and refrozen overnight. It was a day or two before the race and Kevin was on his board getting ready for the competition. As he rode the lift, he spotted a run no one had been on yet. The undisturbed snow was nice and smooth. No bumping and vibrating down a rutted-up run—something that could get hairy when you're going fast and trying to turn.

Kevin knew the mountain well. He knew how to get on the run and where it dumped out. Getting off the lift, he ducked under the rope, strapped on his board and raged downhill. He was about halfway down the run when his goggles suddenly glazed over—it was the snow machines! The spray was freezing on his goggles, turning his world into an opaque blur. Unable to stop, he hit a bump

and hurtled into the sky.

Kevin was off balance when he launched and crashed onto the snow with a tremendous thud, landing on his back. The impact knocked him senseless. When the ski patrol finally found him, they couldn't believe he

wasn't dead. Kevin had launched going full grunt and landed 150 feet down the trail. The ski patrol knew that because they measured where his tracks stopped and started again. Although he was still breathing, he had broken several vertebrae



The Skier's Responsibility Code

Planning to hit the slopes with your snowboard or skis this season? Make sure you follow the Skier's Responsibility Code:

- 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 in view of other skiers and snowboarders.
- Look both ways and

uphill before crossing a trail, merging or starting down the 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.

a leap into the
Twilight





and hit his head hard enough to cause a mild concussion. Had he not been wearing his helmet, it could have been MUCH worse.

Kevin had to cool it for the rest of the season but, with rehabilitation, got on his board again the following year. You can chalk that up to his helmet. The snow wasn't soft as he barreled down the mountain. If he'd crashed without his helmet, it would have been like dumping a bike on the autobahn without a helmet—really dumb!

Helmets aren't "optional;" you can't enter most competitions without one. In fact, the well-dressed snowboarder will also be wearing wrist guards and knee and hip pads

to help cushion impacts.

Finally, raging down a closed run like Kevin did can have some very unpleasant consequences. You can get your ticket ripped and even be fined and arrested. If you're in deep snow it could be even worse—you could get buried. Think about it—if you crash and need medical help, it'll take longer because you're not where you're supposed to be.

You only come up on the weekends. Do you really think you know more about the mountain than the ski patrol and the people working the slopes? Trust them and help them do their job by staying off the closed trails. Don't follow Kevin's example by taking a leap into The Twilight Zone. 🏂

ht. Zone

Adapted from Road & Rec magazine
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CHEAP THRILLS, BIG SKI

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A few years ago my friend, Ed, and I decided to head up to Mission Ridge, a ski resort outside of the little city of Wenatchee, Wash. Another friend, Terry, had a pair of skis he loaned me for the day, which was great because it meant I could save the cost of renting. The only problem was that while I stood 5 feet 11 inches tall, Terry was a full 6 feet 6 inches! Not only were his skis way too long for me, but Terry liked his bindings tight and was a very experienced skier. By comparison, I had skied maybe six times.

Ski Smart BE PREPARED!

Here are some safety tips from the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA):

- Get in shape. Don't try to ski yourself into shape. You'll enjoy skiing more if you're physically fit.

- Obtain proper equipment.

Be sure to have your ski or snowboard bindings adjusted correctly at a local ski shop.

You can rent good ski or snowboarding equipment at resorts.

- When buying skiwear, look for fabric that is water and wind resistant. Look for wind flaps to shield zippers, snug cuffs at wrists and ankles, collars that can be snuggled up to the chin and drawstrings that can be adjusted for comfort and to keep wind out.

- Dress in layers. Layering allows you to accommodate your body's constantly changing temperature. For example, polypropylene underwear feels good next to the skin, dries quickly, absorbs sweat and keeps you warm. Wear a turtleneck, sweater and jacket.

- Bring a headband or hat with you to the slopes because 60 percent of heat loss is through the head. Wear gloves or mittens (mittens are usually better for those susceptible to cold hands).

- Wear sun protection. The sun reflects off the snow and is stronger than you think, even on cloudy days!

- Always have sunglasses and goggles with you and make sure you wear eye protection. Skiing and snowboarding are a lot more fun when you can see.

- Follow the Skier's Responsibility Code (see story "A Leap into the Twilight Zone").

Ed and I decided to leave before the sun came up so we could spend all day on the slopes. Lift tickets were expensive, and we wanted to get our money's worth. We hadn't slept much the night before, so we were already tired before we made our first run.

Things started out OK. I was a little rusty, but Ed had lots of patience. We hit the easy trails and, by noon, I could almost keep up with him. When we headed back to the slopes after a quick lunch, I noticed my legs were feeling a bit fatigued. Ed didn't have that problem because he ran a lot and had skied the previous week. Even

though he was in better shape, I decided I would try to match whatever Ed did. He asked if I felt up to skiing a "Black Diamond"—the most difficult and dangerous of ski runs. Even though I was tired and using the wrong skis, I winked at Ed. We pushed off quickly from the top, not bothering to consider the hazards.

The run was extremely steep and I barely had room to turn. I realized too late my inexperience made me a hazard to myself and other skiers on the narrow slope. Because I was tired and lacked experience, the fast slope was just too much for me to negotiate. I lost my balance and tried

to do a controlled slide. Unfortunately, the slope was too steep and I tumbled out of control. What was even worse, my bindings wouldn't release. The long skis acted like medieval torture devices, painfully twisting my legs as I tumbled.

When I stood up, pain shot through my right knee. Although I could point my skis downhill, I couldn't manage a decent turn. As I headed straight, I felt my speed picking up and thought the only way I could stop would be to fall again. Fortunately, I didn't have to do that and, instead, coasted to a stop near the entrance to the lodge. There I released the bindings and limped to my car. I took some aspirin and Ed drove us the two hours back home.

The next morning, my knee was so swollen I couldn't put on long pants. My wife took me to see a doctor, who informed me that I had a bad sprain and may have damaged my anterior cruciate ligament. I spent two weeks on crutches, followed up by three months of physical therapy. Fortunately, I didn't require surgery.

The next time I went skiing I rented the proper-sized skis from the lodge, had the bindings adjusted for my weight and only skied on those runs that

were matched to my abilities. I also made sure I was rested before the trip and took several breaks during the day.

Since I've been back on the slopes, I've noticed most accidents happen later in the day when people are tired. I've watched injured skiers being carried down on stretchers. I can imagine them telling themselves they'll do things differently next time. At the same time, I've looked into the faces of other skiers and realized most of them believe they'll never have an accident. Thanks to them, the ski patrol, ambulance crews and emergency medical people will always make a living. These "it-won't-happen-to-me" skiers typically only learn the importance of managing risks the hard way—by getting hurt. ❄️

About the author:
Jerry Hollenback is a Navy civilian who served 28 years in the U.S. Army Reserve. Before working for the Navy, he worked for the Army as a safety specialist assigned to the 70th Regional Readiness Command at Fort Lawton, Wash.

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DISABL

Here I am, gearing up for my first full skiing season, anticipating the fresh mountain air, soft snow and the sense of freedom you get gliding down a mountain. I just purchased my outriggers, ski and boot. That's right—just ONE ski and boot. More than a year ago I lost a leg when my Bradley Fighting Vehicle was hit by two rocket-propelled grenades during a patrol near Tikrit, Iraq. My gunner, SGT Andrew "Butter" Butterworth, also lost a leg in that blast. Our platoon defeated the insurgents that day and Andy and I both survived to come home to start our lives over again.

That day in Tikrit also began a new battle for us. Andy and I went through rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center together, helping each other overcome the obstacles posed by our injuries just as we'd helped each other overcome the enemy. While we were there, Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA) and the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) joined to provide sports and recreation therapy to injured Soldiers like us at Walter Reed. Andy and I took advantage of the programs they offered and, with special training, learned to ski. We adopted DSUSA's slogan, "If I can do this, I can do anything."

As I go on the slopes this year, I'll be using special adaptive equipment to ski on one leg. However, I'm only one example of how this equipment can enable handicapped people to ski. Thanks to the emergence of shape-ski technology, which makes turning easier, there is adaptive skiing equipment available to people with a variety of disabilities. The following is a description of some of that equipment.

ED BUT NOT DEFEATED

ED SALAU
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The mono-ski consists of a fiberglass shell mounted on one ski. The skier uses short “outriggers” (forearm crutches with ski tips attached) to steer.

Geared toward users with good upper-body stability, the mono-ski provides the same exhilarating feeling of being on the snow enjoyed by other skiers.

The bi-ski is the most recent development in seated skiing. A fiberglass shell mounted on two independently articulating skis, the bi-ski allows skiers to carve a downhill parallel turn. A handlebar, or “power bar,” allows skiers to steer while adjustable fixed

outriggers near the base give the bi-ski incredible balance. Bi-skis have allowed more-severely injured people, including quadriplegics, experience the thrill of skiing.

The three-track ski is used by skiers who have one good leg and two good arms. Three-track skiers use one regular Alpine ski and outriggers to assist with balance.

The four-track ski is used by people with two legs and arms (natural or prosthetic) who can stand independently or balance themselves with the aid of outriggers. Two regular Alpine skis and two outriggers are used.

Safety is important

for all skiers, and certainly no less so for those who ski with a disability. Here are some commonsense tips that can serve both adaptive and able-bodied skiers:

- Be aware of snow conditions. If several days have passed since the last snowfall and temperatures have dropped below zero, the snow may have solidified and turned to hard-pack. When that happens, skiing speeds dramatically increase. It’s easy to begin a run slowly, only to find you are out of control by your fourth or fifth turn. Once that happens, it can be difficult to avoid other people or obstacles.

- Stay mentally engaged. Know your technique, the terrain you are skiing and where other skiers are around you. Getting distracted, going too fast, losing your confidence or forgetting where you are and what you’re doing is a recipe for disaster.

- Have the skills. Get the necessary training so you’ll know how to turn, control your speed, slow down and stop. Select terrain or runs that are matched to your ability so you ski safely and with confidence. ❌

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DON'T BE WINTER ROADKILL!

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

Don't want to get stranded by the unexpected this winter? Here is a shortened version of the Combat Readiness Center's (CRC) POV Inspection Checklist from the POV Toolbox, along with some editor's notes in italics. To read the full-length version, go to the CRC's Web page at <https://crc.army.mil/home/> and select "Tools."

Tires:

Check to make sure the tread is at least 1 mm deep by inserting a penny with Lincoln's head downward. If the tread does not reach the top of Lincoln's head, the tire doesn't have enough tread. Also check for weathering (extensive cracking on the sidewalls), embedded objects, cuts or uneven wear.

Lights:

Check both headlights to ensure they work in low and high beams. Check your front and rear turn signals and your four-way flashers. Have a buddy stand behind your vehicle to help you check your brake lights and backup lights.

Windshield:

Make sure it's not cracked or

scratched to the degree it impairs vision. *Hint: Many insurance companies will waive your deductible and pay to repair a cracked windshield to avoid the greater cost of replacing it. And here's a trick to help you if you get a crack during your winter trip. Turn on your defroster the moment you start your engine. Doing this allows the defroster to gradually warm the windshield, rather than suddenly blasting it with hot air and spreading the crack.*

Wiper blades:

Make sure blades are in good condition and will clear the outside of the windshield without leaving streaks.

Mirrors:

Are they missing or cracked? Are they properly adjusted? *Hint: Adjust the inside mirror so it looks out the center of the rear window. Lean your head against the inside of the driver-side window and adjust the driver-side outside mirror so you can barely see the side of the car in the mirror's inner edge. Lean your head to the right until you're looking out the center of the windshield and adjust the passenger-side outside mirror until you can barely see the side of the car in the mirror's inner edge. Make sure you angle the outside mirrors up or down as needed so you can see far enough behind you.*

Brakes:

The brake pedal should not go more than halfway to the floor. Also check your parking brake to make sure it will hold your vehicle. To check the parking brake, set the brake, then put the vehicle in gear (automatic transmission) and gently press on the gas pedal. The vehicle should not move. If you have a manual transmission, set the brake, put the transmission in low or reverse gear and then gently let up on the clutch to see if the brake will hold your vehicle.

Bumpers:

Are they missing, loose or damaged?

Horn:

Does it work?

Defrosters:

Does the front defroster blow warm air against the inside of the windshield? Does the light come on when you push the button for the rear-window defroster? Check the effectiveness of the rear-window defroster during winter by turning it on and seeing if it clears the window. *Hint: Are you having a problem with condensation on the inside of your windshield? If your vehicle has a separate button to press to turn on the air conditioner, go ahead and*



push it. The defroster air will remain warm, but the air conditioner will dry the air and remove the condensation.

Seatbelts/shoulder harnesses:

Check to make sure they're not frayed and that they retract properly.

Under the hood:

- Are the brake, transmission and power steering fluids at the proper level?
- Is the window washer reservoir filled with an antifreeze-type washer fluid? *Hint: If you're planning a long drive during wintry weather, keep an extra gallon of antifreeze-type window washer fluid in the trunk. Running out of washer fluid, especially*

after dark, can make driving much more difficult. Also, antifreeze washer fluid has its limits. Sub-zero temperatures, compounded by your built-in wind chill factor as you drive down the road, can turn even antifreeze washer fluid into frozen lumps on your windshield. When that happens, it's time to pull off the road and find accommodations.

- Check your radiator fluid level to make sure it is within proper limits. Also check the coolant to see if it has the proper amount of antifreeze needed to protect your engine during winter.
- Check your battery's condition to see if it needs replacing. Many batteries have an opening on top you can look through and see a color. Green normally indicates your battery is charging properly. Also, make sure the battery's cables and terminals are clean. *Hint: If your battery is nearing the end of its warranty period, you might want to replace it before you travel during winter. Winter temperatures tend to thicken the oil in the engine's*

crankcase, making it harder to start.

- Check your radiator hoses for cracking, bulges, chaffing or deterioration. *Hint: Squeeze the radiator hoses when the engine is cold. If it feels and sounds like you're squeezing a crinkled-up bunch of paper, replace the hose.*

Emergency equipment:

Ensure you have a first aid kit, warning triangle, flashlight (with good batteries), compact fire extinguisher, blanket, flares, small shovel, chains, tools and any host nation-required items if you're traveling overseas. A bag of kitty litter can help you get traction if you get stuck. Also, it's not a bad idea to keep some high-energy snacks such as nuts or canned meats just in case you're stranded for a while. A thermos full of hot coffee, tea or soup will also help keep you warm. 🍌

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Two Flats and One Spare!

It was a wintry Friday and I was attending the second day of my Aviation Safety Officer's Course at Fort Rucker, Ala. Since my home was only 200 miles away, driving there to be with my wife on weekends would be easy. I'd filled out all the proper paperwork and given it to the class leader. I wanted to make sure I covered all the requirements before I started out on my drive. To my dismay, my planned departure time of 4 p.m. came and went and I was still sitting in class. It was almost 5 p.m. when the instructors gave us our safety briefing and released us.

At last I was free and ready to hit the road. I made a quick call to my wife to tell her I was on my way. It was getting dark and, to top it all off, very cold.

The trip took me north on U.S. Highway 231, a multilane road that makes for speedy travel. I was enjoying the

radio and keeping my mind entertained when about 12 miles north of Troy, Ala., I noticed a strange vibration coming from the back of my truck. I wanted to check it out, but it was dark and there wasn't a good place to pull off the road. I slowed down until I finally found a section of the shoulder where I could safely get off. As I stopped and turned on the four-way flashers, I thought, "Great, what a way to start the evening!"

I got out and walked to the back of the truck only to find my right-rear tire was going flat. I started digging out the tools I'd need for changing the tire, noting that while I needed a flashlight, I didn't have one. Then I remembered my mother had given me this "all-in-one" vacuum/tire pump/flashlight/emergency flasher for Christmas. I laughed when she gave it to me and thought, "I'll never use this."

Was I ever wrong! I was glad I'd put it in the truck before driving down to Fort Rucker for the course. At least I could see what I was doing.

As I jacked up the vehicle, I heard the hiss of a tire going flat—but it wasn't the one I was changing! I turned to look at the sound and gasped, "Oh NOOOOOOO"—the right front was also going flat. The clock was ticking, so I made a quick decision to change the flat I was working on and return to Troy to try and find a tire repair shop. But I had another problem. Where can you go in Troy to get a flat fixed at 6 p.m. on a Friday evening?

I returned to Troy and found a shop, but the sign out front said "Closed." But wait a minute; is that movement I see inside? I walked through the door and saw the manager's son waiting for his father to close the shop. With some talk and a lot of understanding,

he decided to fix my tires and sent me on my way.

Lessons learned

I came away from this trip with a new outlook on a simple task I'd ignored that night but now routinely perform. First, before I start a long road trip, I inspect my vehicle and check for things which, if left unattended, could leave me stranded on the highway. Second, I always ensure someone knows my travel plans and route. Third, I leave early enough so I'll have plenty of time to arrive safely. Fourth, I now make sure I have an emergency roadside kit and a flashlight. And last but not least, I try to prepare for the unexpected. After all, it's usually the unexpected that leaves you stranded on the side of the road. ✖

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POV

Privately Owned Vehicle

POV and privately owned motorcycle (POM) accidents remain the leading cause of accidental death in the Army, claiming the lives of 141 Soldiers during FY05. While the 422 Class A through C accidents reported so far is 33 fewer than last year's total, the number of fatalities increased by nine and are linked to a single disturbing trend—a near-doubling in motorcycle fatalities. During FY04, 23 Soldiers died in POM accidents. In FY05, 45 Soldiers died in these accidents, the highest number since FY87, when 54 Soldiers were killed.

FY05 Army Off-Duty Gro

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Age is a factor in these accidents, with younger Soldiers suffering the highest number of fatalities. For POV fatalities in general, 51 percent of the Soldiers who died were 25 or younger. The trend was somewhat split for motorcycles. While Soldiers 29 and younger accounted for 51 percent of the fatalities, there were seven fatalities involving riders in their 30s. Those deaths are a sobering reminder that motorcycle safety is important for riders of all ages.

According to the accident reports, the most frequent mistakes made by riders were excessive speed (41 percent), abrupt control/steering (18 percent) and driving under the influence of alcohol (18 percent). In

addition, more than one-third of the riders killed were not wearing helmets. These reports reflect the causes of motorcycle accidents as reported by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and are shown below:

- *lack of basic riding skills*
- *failure to appreciate the motorcycle's inherent operating characteristics*
- *failure to appreciate the motorcycle's limitations*
- *failure to use special precautions while riding*
- *failure to use defensive-driving techniques*
- *lack of specific braking and cornering skills*
- *failure to follow speed limit*

Furthermore, according to NHTSA, safely operating a motorcycle takes more skill and coordination than driving a car. Therefore, riding a motorcycle while under the influence of

Modern PPE benefits riders in three ways by protecting them from the elements, reducing the severity of their injuries and making them more visible to other motorists.

As serious as the

CONNECTIONS

For more information on avoiding motorcycle accidents, visit NHTSA's motorcycle safety Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/motorcycle/motosafety.html>.

even a small amount of alcohol significantly increases the danger of a crash. Making matters even worse is the fact motorcycles provide no physical protection in an accident. Riders must rely on their personal protective equipment (PPE)—helmets, protective gear and clothing—to help them survive impacts, which most often injure riders' heads, arms and legs.

motorcycle accident problem is, we must not forget that the majority of Soldiers were killed in sedans. During FY05, sedan accidents accounted for 80 (57 percent) POV fatalities. Just as in motorcycle accidents, failure to use PPE—in this case seatbelts—contributed to many of the fatalities. Of the Soldiers killed in sedans, 27 were involved in rollover

Round Accident Review

And we do?

GLEN DAVIS
Engineering Research Psychologist
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accidents, with nine Soldiers being ejected from the vehicle. In addition, 17 of those Soldiers who died were passengers—victims of the operator's recklessness. More than half of all Soldiers who died in POV accidents were not wearing seatbelts.

Regardless of what vehicle you drive or ride, the highways and roadways are dangerous. Being committed to driving safely will reduce your risk of having

a crash, including those caused by other drivers. Conversely, if you consistently take needless risks, you're setting yourself up for an accident. The danger, safety psychologist Scott Geller¹ explained, is risk-taking behavior is rarely punished with an injury, near miss or even a traffic citation. Instead, it is most often rewarded with convenience, comfort or time saved. Unfortunately, because that behavior has been rewarded it is likely

to be repeated. The downside is when the consequences come, they tend to be severe.

So before you drive your car or ride your motorcycle, carefully examine your driving habits. Think about the close calls and accidents you've already had and ask yourself what you did that got you into trouble. If you didn't buckle your seatbelt, wear your helmet or use other protective clothing or equipment, ask yourself why. Then ask

yourself if the cheap thrills, time saved and inconvenience avoided were worth the potential cost of your life. If you think about it, you'll realize they weren't.



PIO

Personal Injury-Other*

During FY05, we lost 57 Soldiers in 1,089 PIO Class A through C accidents, making these mishaps the second-leading cause of accidental death in the Army. The trend in these accidents is similar to that of POVs. While there were 43 fewer accidents during FY05, as compared to FY04, we lost four more Soldiers. Of the 57 fatalities, 27 (47 percent) occurred off duty. The following is a breakdown of these accidents:

- Water-related activities took the lives of 11 Soldiers. Four Soldiers died while swimming, two while boating and one each while canoeing, fishing, scuba diving and hunting. In addition, a Soldier was found drowned in a river.

- Falls took the lives of six Soldiers. Two Soldiers died when they fell while hiking. One Soldier died when he leaned over a balcony rail to spit. Another Soldier died when

he hung by his hands outside his barracks window and fell to the ground. One Soldier died when he fell through an attic floor, and another Soldier died when he fell from his bed.

- Other causes led to the loss of 10 Soldiers. Six Soldiers were hit and killed by vehicles while walking or standing on or alongside a roadway. Two Soldiers died of accidental discharges from their privately

owned weapons. One Soldier died during a privately owned aircraft crash. Another Soldier collapsed and died after conducting personal physical fitness training.

By the very nature of your work as a Soldier, you engage in risky activities. The Army's goal is to help you control your risks—including those you face off duty—to bring them to acceptable levels. When you're off duty, the choice to be safe is in your

hands. As you make those decisions, never forget the odds you face if you choose to be a risk taker. To survive, you must beat the odds every time. To die, you only have to fail once. Ask yourself which is better—getting a quick thrill, saving a couple of minutes and avoiding an inconvenience, or being alive, physically whole and able to enjoy the rest of your life. It's not a hard decision. Your family, your battle buddies and

*Personal Injury-Other accidents are Army accidents that involve injury to personnel not covered by any other accident type.

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the Army will be grateful if you make the right choice.

Note: These statistics are current from the Army Risk Management Information System as of Nov. 19, 2005. Delayed reports and follow-up details on preliminary reports could change the statistics, figures and findings.

¹Geller, E. Scott, *The Psychology of Safety Handbook*, CRC Press/Lewis Publishers, Boca Raton, FL. 2001.

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A Call to Leaders

RIA MARTINEZ
G-7, Mobile Training Team
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

There is an old saying that goes, “We are only as strong as our weakest link.”

I believe you, as a first-line supervisor, are the critical link in the Army’s leadership chain. You’re the Army’s top expert when it comes to knowing and protecting your Soldiers.

I ask you to read Preliminary Loss Report No. 5170 on page 15. As you will see, this Soldier died in an accident in Tennessee.

Whether Soldiers die on the battlefield or from accidents stateside, their loss affects the Army’s mission, morale, resources and overall readiness. A loss is a loss, regardless the cause.



As a retired Army NCO, I know Soldiers are only as good as the training their leaders provide. If leaders don't train Soldiers to be safe, who will? As a first-line supervisor, you're the first leader your Soldiers see in the morning and the last one they see before they depart at night. They depend on you to show them what "right" looks like.

You can teach your Soldiers what right looks like by training them to use Composite Risk Management (CRM). When you do that, you are empowering them to reduce losses; which benefits you, your organization and the entire Army. Using CRM is not a great mystery; it's the same five-step risk management approach outlined in FM 100-14. What makes CRM different is it addresses not only accidental losses, but also those caused by combat, suicide, assault and homicide. To quickly review the five steps:

Step 1 - Identify Hazards

Identify what will hurt you, your Soldiers and the mission.

Step 2 - Assess Hazards

Are the risks small, medium or high? What is the severity or probability of the risks?

Step 3 - Develop Controls and Make Decisions

Develop options to reduce the risks and decide which are the best controls.

Step 4 - Implement Controls

Follow through with your plans.

Step 5 - Supervise and Evaluate

Make changes as needed to modify or adjust.

CRM was designed to be ongoing and flexible to meet the changing missions and environments

Soldiers encounter in garrison and on the battlefield. As you teach your Soldiers to use CRM, they can gain experience completing risk assessments for normal and long-range planning. Even better, they'll learn how to quickly and naturally perform risk assessments under any circumstances.

Once Soldiers accept and understand CRM, they'll automatically have their "risk mode" activated. As using CRM becomes automatic, Soldiers will better protect each other—whether in combat or in garrison, day or night. And CRM isn't just limited to on post. Soldiers who've taught their families to identify and avoid hazards can deploy with greater peace of mind, knowing their families will be safer.

On the battlefield, Soldiers using CRM can tell their buddies, "I've got your back," confident they've thought through the dangers and planned for them. Because they've asked themselves, "What's going to kill me and my buddies," they're better prepared to defeat the enemy and come home alive.

And that's why you are important as a first-line supervisor. The training you give your Soldiers is their best defense against the twin hazards of enemy action and accidents. Are you training your Soldiers to win and survive? 🇺🇸

Contact the author at (334) 255-0208, DSN 558-0208, or by e-mail at orillia.martinez@crc.army.mil.

PLR PRELIMINARY LOSS REPORTS

A 101st Airborne Division Soldier was killed in a motorcycle accident on 29 September 2005 at 0045 local in Clarksville, TN. The 25-year-old SGT was negotiating a curve when he lost control of his newly purchased Ducati motorcycle and struck a telephone pole, killing him instantly. The NCO was wearing a DOT-approved helmet, jacket and gloves. Initial reports indicate speed and an uneven road surface were contributing factors.



UFOs are real!

(unrestrained flying

MARIA GIOVANETTY
CP-12 Safety Intern

Editor's Note:
When I was a
kid, I used to
think wearing

my seatbelt in the backseat was optional. After all, if we were in a crash, wouldn't I just hit the seat in front of me? Fortunately, I never had to put that theory to the test—but others have. As the author relates, an unbelted backseat passenger is always hovering just a split second away from becoming an "unrestrained flying object" (UFO).

It was a rainy day in March and my 2-month-old son had just finished his checkup at Jacksonville Naval Hospital, Fla. At the time, we had a two-door Ford Escort GT.

We'd installed my son's car seat in the backseat, placing it behind the front passenger seat and facing to the rear. Due to the shots my son had received, I was in the back with him, sitting in the middle-rear seat without my seatbelt. It's not that I had a problem with seatbelts; it's just that day my concern for my son distracted me and I failed to follow a simple rule.

It was raining and cold when we left the base around 12:30 p.m. We were in front of the base going about 45 mph when my husband suddenly screamed my name. I

shot a glance forward and saw a Chevrolet pickup coming straight at us. At that moment we collided head-on, hitting with such force that I flew over the front seat and headfirst into the windshield. As I smashed into the glass, I felt my husband's hand holding me, trying to keep me from going through the windshield. After the impact, I slumped into the backseat—but not for long. Almost immediately we were rear-ended and I was thrown into the windshield again. Once more my husband pulled me back. I'd barely slumped back into the seat when I was thrown

into the windshield for a third time when the car that rear-ended us was hit from behind. It was like a domino effect. We didn't know how many more times we would be hit.

Once the paramedics and firemen arrived on the scene, we realized how lucky we'd been. This accident happened only seconds before I was going to take my son from his car seat and give him fever medicine for his shots. Had I been holding him when the accident happened, he wouldn't have had a chance.

My husband sustained only minor injuries—thanks largely to the

objects)



fact he was wearing his seatbelt. My son's car seat had done its job effectively, protecting him and preventing him from being ejected from the car. As for myself,

problems which took months of therapy to relieve. To this day, my back is not the same as before the accident.

As we look back, we realize we did some

care of him, I neglected to take care of myself by buckling up. After all, who would've expected a drunk driver on the road when it was barely past noon? After the accident, the pickup's driver showed no remorse for what he had done. He was too drunk to realize how close he'd come to causing a tragedy. As it turned out, this wasn't his first DUI.

Since the accident, we have made it a point to always wear our seatbelts. Also, we never drink and drive; we've seen firsthand what that can cause. As for me, I am a big advocate of the

Child Passenger Safety Program. I coordinate community events to ensure child safety seats are properly installed and educate parents about the importance of having their children properly restrained.

Our accident taught us three key things—properly using child safety seats, making sure each person in the vehicle is buckled up, and staying sober behind the wheel saves lives. ✕

Contact the author at (808) 216-5217, or by e-mail at maria.giovanetty@us.army.mil

CONNECTIONS

For information on child safety seat installation, ratings and recalls, go to the National Highway Traffic Administration's Web site at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/> and select "Child Safety Seat Information" under "Quick Links."

I had minor cuts and major bruises all over. Each impact during the crash turned me into a UFO headed straight for the windshield. I had serious back and neck

things right and others wrong. We took the proper precautions for our son, making sure he rode restrained in a child safety seat. However, while I was busy taking



ARAP

HELPING LEADERS

CHARLES SCHIEFFER
ARAP Program Manager
U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (CRC) recently developed the Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP). The program's goal is to communicate the Army's strong conviction that Composite Risk Management (CRM) is the best way to defend against the significant losses currently being experienced in the force. Regardless of why or how a Soldier is lost, the result is the same—one less Soldier available for the fight. As accidents in our formations continue to degrade combat power, the CRC is committed to finding innovative ways to reduce accidents, decrease fatalities and keep our Soldiers fit to continue the Global War on Terrorism.

ARAP is a Web-based initiative that provides battalion commanders with data on their formation's readiness posture through five segments:

- Processes Auditing—assesses the processes used to identify hazards and correct problems
- Reward Systems—assesses the unit's program of rewards

and discipline to reinforce proper behavior and correct risky actions

- Quality Control—places emphasis on high standards of performance
- Risk Management—assesses the health of unit processes
- Command and Control—assesses leadership, communication and policies as they relate to CRM

Designed for use by battalion-sized units, the program asks the following several questions of battalion commanders: "Wouldn't you like to know if your unit is about to experience a mishap?" "Wouldn't you like to prevent the loss of personnel and equipment?" "Don't you want to protect your combat power?"

One of ARAP's goals is to identify and correct organizational conditions that could increase the potential for mishaps. Following survey administration (the assessment phase), the commander receives one-on-one feedback on key issues regarding command climate, safety culture, resource availability, workload, estimated success of certain safety intervention programs,

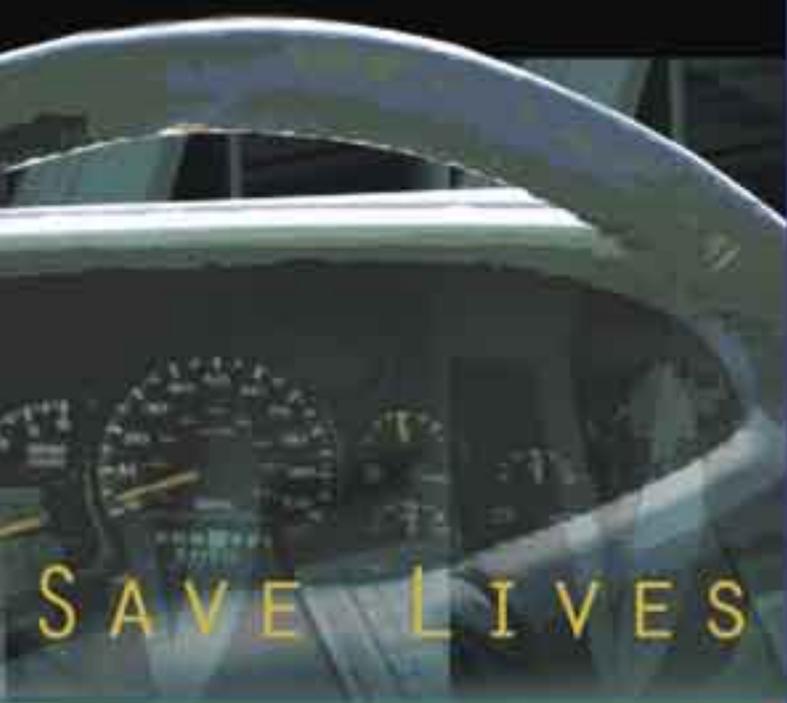
and other factors relating to their unit's overall readiness.

Here's how it works. The battalion commander completes a personal telephone registration process with a member of the CRC ARAP team. From there, the commander and unit personnel complete the online portion of the survey, which consists of 61 scaled questions that can be answered in about 12 minutes. Once two-thirds of the battalion has taken the survey, the battalion commander calls the CRC to receive an in-depth debrief of the results. This brief includes a discussion of the unit's strengths and weaknesses, and also provides suggestions for possible courses of action and solutions used by previous battalion commanders.

SO, WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

- All assessments are confidential. Only unit commanders or their designated representatives and the CRC have access to results. A confidential debrief is conducted on a one-on-one basis between the commander and the CRC.





Motorcycle Safety Guide Available

Online

The Combat Readiness Center (CRC) has fielded a new online motorcycle safety guide to address the rising number of motorcycle fatalities among Soldiers. The guide, available on the CRC's Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>, lists the requirements for riders and provides safety information linked to a variety of other useful online sites.

The 33,425 motorcycles currently registered on Army installations reflect the growing popularity of motorcycling among Soldiers. One unfortunate result of this trend is motorcycle accident fatalities have dramatically increased during recent

years. For example, 45 Soldiers lost their lives in motorcycle accidents during FY05, nearly twice as many as the previous year. The new motorcycle safety guide, along with the requirement from the Chief of Staff, Army, that all units use the CRC's Six Point Program, is designed to reduce these tragic losses. While motorcycling hazards can't be completely eliminated, these tools can help reduce them through proper training and rider and motorcycle preparation.

The requirements Soldiers must meet and the skills they must have to ride safely can seem overwhelming. The new motorcycle safety guide, along with the CRC's updated online "POV Toolbox," can help Soldiers ride to survive.

For more information on the Army Motorcycle Safety Program, contact CW4 Earnest Eakins at (334) 255-2781, DSN 558-2781, or by e-mail at earnest.eakins@crc.army.mil.

- Assessments are predictive. Studies conducted by the U.S. Navy over the past six years have shown units in the survey's lower spectrum have twice the number of fatalities and more than twice the number of Class A accidents.

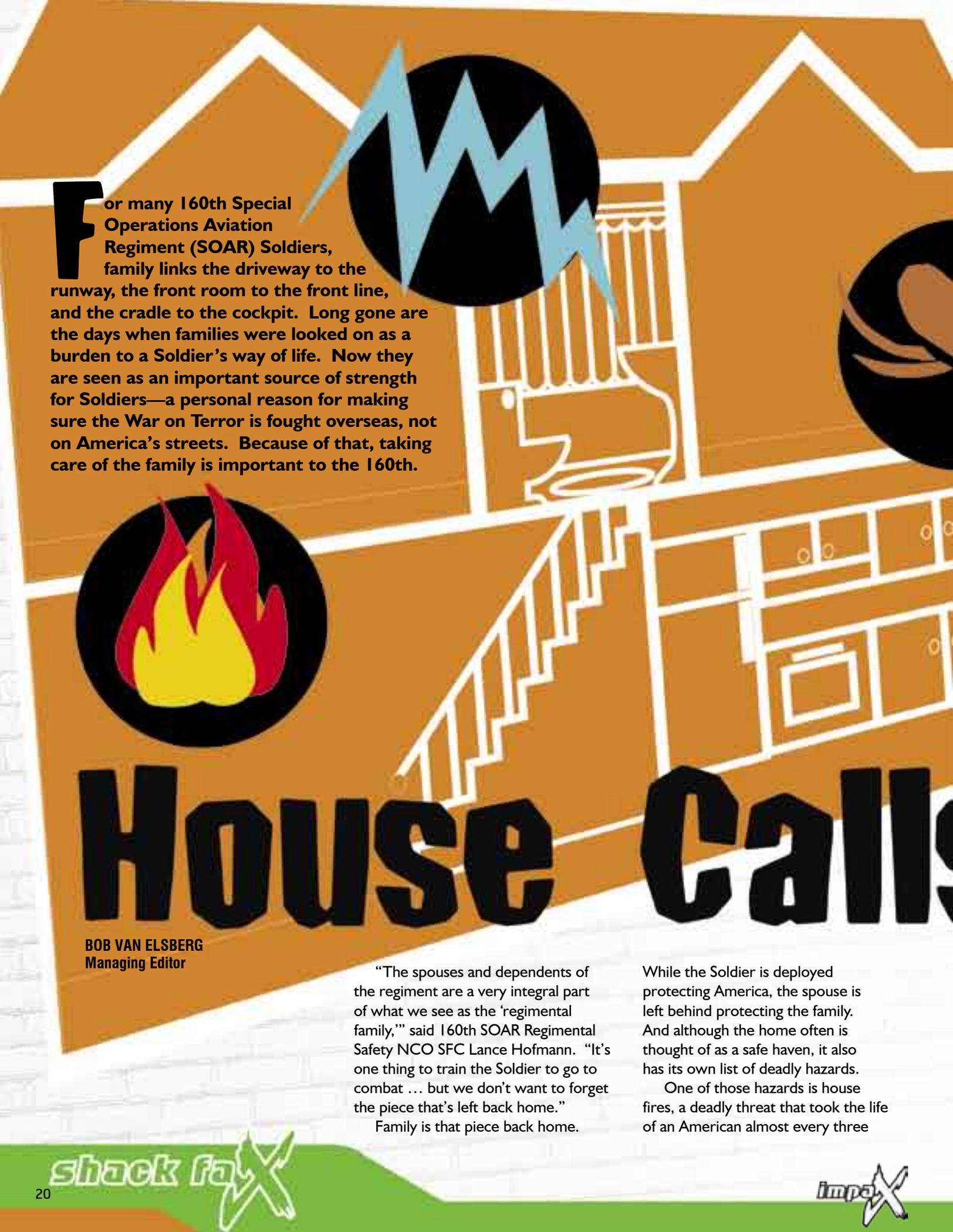
- All assessments and users are anonymous.

- These assessments are a "free look" inside a unit. They allow commanders to take an honest look at their safety culture and evaluate CRM processes.

- The program is Web-based, quick and easy and can be found at <https://unitready.army.mil>.

For more information on ARAP or to schedule an assessment for your battalion, contact Mr. Charles Schieffer, ARAP Program Manager, at (334) 255-9362, DSN 558-9362, or by e-mail at charles.schieffer@us.army.mil or arap@crc.army.mil. The ARAP team looks forward to hearing from you!





For many 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) Soldiers, family links the driveway to the runway, the front room to the front line, and the cradle to the cockpit. Long gone are the days when families were looked on as a burden to a Soldier's way of life. Now they are seen as an important source of strength for Soldiers—a personal reason for making sure the War on Terror is fought overseas, not on America's streets. Because of that, taking care of the family is important to the 160th.



House calls

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

“The spouses and dependents of the regiment are a very integral part of what we see as the ‘regimental family,’” said 160th SOAR Regimental Safety NCO SFC Lance Hofmann. “It’s one thing to train the Soldier to go to combat ... but we don’t want to forget the piece that’s left back home.”

Family is that piece back home.

While the Soldier is deployed protecting America, the spouse is left behind protecting the family. And although the home often is thought of as a safe haven, it also has its own list of deadly hazards.

One of those hazards is house fires, a deadly threat that took the life of an American almost every three

hours during 2002, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. As part of the 160th's Family Safety Stand-down Day, a local fire department set up its "fire house"—a trailer with a special room inside for practicing escaping house fires—to provide some practical training.

Inside the room, families were taught to drop down low and crawl to avoid smoke inhalation and to check doors to make sure they're not hot before opening them.

Electrocution is another threat faced by Soldiers and their families, especially if they accidentally come into contact with power lines. Using a special display mounted on a trailer, a couple of linemen showed what happens when power lines contact kite strings, tree limbs or automobiles. The linemen stressed the importance of "bunny hopping"—putting both feet and hands together and hopping away from a downed power line. They explained the issue is "step potential," the difference in voltage between one foot and the other when walking or running away from a downed line. Because one foot would be further from the power line than the other, the difference in voltage would run through the person and possibly electrocute them.

Some of the threats are part of the Fort Campbell environment. Brown recluse spiders are a problem in post housing, so the 160th called in the "Orkin Man" to talk about controlling these pests. Because many Soldiers and families at Fort Campbell aren't familiar with local poisonous snakes, wildlife personnel set up displays so they could see a water moccasin, a cottonmouth and a rattlesnake up close. In addition,

families got to see a raccoon and a bobcat and learn why wild animals must be treated with respect.

Keeping children safe was of particular importance, so the 160th had the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation come out and talk about Amber Alerts and Internet crimes against children. Highway patrolmen provided courtesy checks of child safety seats to ensure they were installed properly. Smokey the Bear talked to kids and their parents about fire safety when camping. With summer approaching, members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary talked about boating safety, while the Red Cross and local TV forecasters discussed stormy weather and the need for a family disaster plan. In addition, the Army Combat Readiness Center sent its "Skid Monster" vehicles to train Soldiers and their spouses on how to avoid skidding on slick roads.

Helping family members avoid accidents also touches on mission readiness, according to Hofmann. "If a spouse gets injured at home and a Soldier has to take time off to care for them, then we've lost that Soldier for however long that takes," Hofmann said. The same is true, he added, when Soldiers or their dependents get hurt during off-duty recreation. The hours lost because of those accidents end up being subtracted from the on-duty mission. That's not a good equation.

The safety of Soldiers at home is equally important. Hofmann explained it does no good for Soldiers to use safety goggles at work if they don't use them at home and suffer an eye injury. Either way, their work performance is affected. He

gave an example from a few years ago when a Night Stalker came back from a deployment only to fall while working at home. The Soldier spent several months on restricted duty.

Hoffman explained, "You come back having survived a combat operation and think cleaning the gutters is very simple and nothing's going to happen to you. However, if you think it through, simply raising an aluminum ladder and hitting a power line could cost you your life just as surely as enemy action." ❌



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Blending CRM and

SUSAN JERVIS
Safety Engineer
Army Materiel Command
Fort Belvoir, Va.

Jason Phillips headed out of the safety office and to his car. He drove across the installation to attend the last day of his Lean Six Sigma (LSS) training. So far, the training had been great. He'd learned the LSS methodology and thought process, and he'd also thought about a couple of projects where he could improve his safety processes.

Just as Jason sat down and opened his notebook, the instructor introduced guest speaker Donald Robbins, the LSS champion for the installation. Robbins told the class about a recent video teleconference where he learned how the Army planned to use LSS to aid business transformation. The local installation had already been using LSS for a year. Frequent articles in the post newspaper had shown how LSS improvements were saving the installation's customers time and money. As the speaker wrapped up his comments, Jason was still jotting down his own ideas for green belt projects.

As the class moved into detailed discussions on the LSS methodology, Jason started thinking about how the process used by an LSS team paralleled Composite Risk Management (CRM). He realized he and his safety staff could use CRM to make significant contributions to the installation's LSS teams.

As Jason thought about the similarities between the two programs, comparing LSS with the five steps of CRM, he made the following observations:

Step 1

The first step in LSS is defining the problem, process or area the team plans to improve. This includes fully understanding who owns the process, who is the customer and who the many players are that participate in the process.

This first step of CRM is identifying the hazards, which is very similar. To identify a potential hazard, you must be able to describe the operation or task being performed, know who is involved in performing the task and understand the tools and techniques used in accomplishing the task.

Step 2

The second step of LSS is measuring and quantifying the process. This means the team must identify the value and non-value added steps of the process. Once they understand which process steps don't add value, it's much easier for the team to streamline and simplify the process. In addition, the team must also develop a strategy to measure how well the process is working.

The complementary step in CRM is assessing hazards. This is where you analyze potential hazards associated with a task and determine their severity and probability. You can assess the hazards using qualitative descriptions or quantitative information, if it is available.



Lean Six Sigma

Step 3

The LSS team is now ready to begin analyzing the process. From their analysis, they will determine the key variables and inputs to the process and how those affect the final product. The team also analyzes the variables in the process and identifies how key steps affect the desired outcome.

In CRM, this is the point where you develop controls and make decisions. Just as an LSS team analyzes a process in detail, this is the CRM step where controls are developed to reduce the likelihood and severity of hazards. As you consider various controls, you'll need to weigh and balance the cost with the benefits in risk reduction.

Step 4

Having analyzed the process, the LSS team is now ready to implement changes to improve the quality and efficiency of the process flow.

The corresponding CRM step is to implement controls to mitigate the hazards and improve safety and effectiveness.

Step 5

The final step in LSS is to control the improved process. During this step, the team monitors and reviews process changes to ensure they provide the desired improvements in efficiency and quality. If the process isn't performing as expected, the team will then make adjustments or other changes.

The final step of CRM, supervise and evaluate, has the same objective. If the chosen controls don't effectively mitigate the hazards, it's time to reevaluate the situation and develop different controls.

As the instructor wrapped up his discussion, Jason was excited about the ways he and his safety team could incorporate CRM into the LSS events on the installation. By using both processes together, Jason could see how he and his safety staff could simplify and improve the projects he'd been thinking about while also improving safety. 🧠



For online information on the Army Materiel Command's Lean Six Sigma program, visit <http://www.amc.army.mil/lean/page.aspx?id=0>.

Contact the author at (703) 806-8706, DSN 656-8706, or by e-mail at susan.jervis@us.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.

accident Briefs

POV

Class A

- A 22-year-old National Guardsman died when the POV he was riding in was forced off the road by a dump truck entering its lane. The POV overturned and the guardsman was thrown from the backseat and killed.

- A Soldier was killed when she was involved in a four-car collision. Although medical help was summoned, she was later pronounced dead at a local hospital.

- A Soldier was driving his vehicle with two other Soldiers as passengers when he lost control, ran off the road and overturned several times. The driver and one of his passengers were not wearing their seatbelts and were thrown from the vehicle. The driver was hospitalized for 17 days

while the other Soldier died from head injuries. The third Soldier was wearing his seatbelt and was given first aid treatment and released.

- A 23-year-old private first class was riding in a vehicle driven by another Soldier when it ran off the road and overturned. The Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt and was thrown from the vehicle and killed.

- A 22-year-old West Point Cadet was killed when he was struck head-on by a drunk driver who veered into his lane. The cadet had been wearing his seatbelt.

- A 23-year-old private first class was killed when his vehicle left the roadway and hit a tree. The Soldier had been wearing his seatbelt.

- A 21-year-old Soldier was killed when his POV drifted into the oncoming lane and struck a large truck head-on. Seatbelt use is unknown.

- Three Soldiers were passengers in a Toyota sedan on an autobahn in Germany when the driver, a sergeant, attempted to pass other traffic and rear-ended a tractor-trailer. A 24-year-old E-4 passenger suffered fatal head injuries in the crash. The driver was also injured and was hospitalized for 17 days. Seatbelt use was not reported.

- Two E-4 Soldiers were killed when their vehicle was pulling out of a parking lot and was hit by a POV driven by a sergeant. The accident occurred off post and seatbelt use was not reported.

- A 20-year-old private first class was driving his POV when he lost control, ran off the road and struck a power pole. The Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt and suffered severe head injuries that left him with a permanent total disability.

Class C

- A 41-year-old lieutenant colonel was struck head-on by a drunk driver traveling the wrong way on the highway. The Soldier was wearing his seatbelt and his vehicle's air bags deployed during the collision. The Soldier was hospitalized for five days and placed on restricted duty for 90 days.

- A 21-year-old private first class was speeding when he failed to notice the vehicle ahead was slowing down and rear-ended it. Although the Soldier was wearing his seatbelt, he was thrown forward into the deploying air bag and sustained temporary nerve damage in his shoulder



• A private first class was driving on an interstate at 2:45 a.m. on a weekend when his vehicle left the roadway and overturned. The Soldier was not wearing his seatbelt and was thrown from the vehicle and killed.

WEAR YOUR SEATBELT!

and upper back. He was hospitalized for two days and lost four workdays.

POM

Class A

• A 27-year-old sergeant was riding at a high speed when a POV in front of him slowed to make a left turn. The sergeant was unable to stop in time and rear-ended the POV, suffering fatal injuries. The sergeant had been wearing a helmet, but it did not save his life in this high-speed accident.

• A 26-year-old sergeant was riding at a high speed when he lost control and stuck a barrier. The Soldier was wearing a non-DOT approved helmet at the time of the accident and died from his injuries.



• A 30-year-old captain was operating his motorcycle when he ran off the road

and hit a power pole. He sustained internal injuries and later died in the hospital. Helmet and PPE use were not reported.

• A sergeant lost control of his motorcycle and struck a concrete barrier. He was pronounced dead at the scene. He was wearing his helmet and PPE at the time of the accident.

Class B

• A staff sergeant lost control of his motorcycle, ran off the road and struck a fence post. The impact severed one of the Soldier's feet and fractured his arm and C5 vertebrae, resulting in a permanent partial disability injury. He was wearing his helmet and PPE at the time of the accident.

UNNATURAL SELECTIONS

This is my friend's truck shortly after he flipped it. The accident took place on Campobello Island, which is right next to Lubec, Maine, while he was on his way home from a night out with friends. After the Fourth of July celebration, there's always a big party in Lubec where everyone goes. My friend had been at the party and was drinking a lot. Throughout the night, several people had held onto his keys to keep him from driving, but someone finally gave in and let him have them.

On the way home, my friend's driving became erratic and he struck a utility pole. He was able to back up and make it about 2 or 3 miles farther down the road when he lost control and flipped the truck over twice. Determined to get home, he got out of the truck and tried to roll it back over—that's how drunk he was!

Although he was not wearing his seatbelt, my friend wasn't seriously injured in the accident. But he did learn a valuable lesson about



drinking and driving. Since that night, he won't dare get behind the wheel if he's been drinking—and he always buckles up. My friend was lucky. Drinking and driving kills, so think twice before you get behind the wheel if you are under the influence. You might not be so lucky.

FY06
through Nov 05

Class A-C
accidents/Soldiers killed

Cars
19/9

Vans
1/0

Motorcycles
14/5

Trucks
4/2

Other*
0/0

*Includes tractor trailers,
unknown POVs and bicycles

38 total
DEATHS

3 year
average: **17**

stats

Class C

- A 44-year-old sergeant first class was riding his Suzuki RF900 motorcycle home from work when the vehicle in front of him stopped and forced him to rapidly brake. Although he was going less than 10 mph, the rear of the motorcycle lifted off the ground and threw the Soldier onto the street. The Soldier sustained a broken clavicle, knee and toes. The Soldier was not wearing his helmet at the time of the accident.

- A 33-year-old staff sergeant was riding his 1996 Suzuki JXXR en route to picking up a dependent from school when he hit a wet patch of road and lost control. The Soldier was thrown

from the motorcycle and broke his ankle. He was wearing his helmet at the time of the accident.

- A 21-year-old E-4 was hospitalized for two days and lost 60 workdays when he had an accident while riding a dirt bike he'd borrowed from a friend. The Soldier applied too much power while in soft sand, lost control and was thrown over the handlebars and sustained head and chest injuries. Although the Soldier had worn a helmet, goggles and gloves, he had not attended Motorcycle Safety Foundation training and was not licensed to operate a motorcycle.

Personnel Injury

Class A

- A 54-year-old colonel was horseback riding when he was thrown from his horse. He was transported to a hospital, where he later died of head injuries.

- A 24-year-old private was struck by a civilian vehicle while standing in front of a bar. He was taken to a hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

- A 40-year-old sergeant first class fell down a flight of stairs and sustained a fractured skull and bruising to his brain and lungs. He later died in the hospital.

- A 19-year-old private was shot in the neck and killed when another Soldier was showing off his new Bushmaster M4 carbine and it accidentally discharged.

Class C

- A 21-year-old private slipped and fell while attempting to catch a football and dislocated his arm.

- A 41-year-old sergeant wearing body armor violently wrenched his lower back when he slipped on a wet side step while attempting to exit a seven-passenger van.



SNUFFY goes AIRBORNE!

Pivate Joe Snuffy—being the rough-and-tumble adventurer he is—managed to get an assignment to an airborne division. His leaders soon recognized he'd be unsafe jumping out of anything higher than his bed, so they never let him near an aircraft.

With longing heart, Snuffy would watch his fellow Rangers head out to the airfield, knowing that in a little while they'd be floating down from the sky. He hung his head, embarrassed at being the division's most conspicuous "Chairborne" Ranger.

Still, if he couldn't get off the ground as a Ranger, he could at least make short hops as a skateboarder. Snuffy got off duty, grabbed his skateboard and headed off to meet some friends at a local mall. The parking lot had an incline Snuffy and his buddies liked to use for really

CONNECTIONS

For more information on skateboarding, visit the following Web sites: <http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/sktebord.htm>, and <http://www.skateboard.com/frontside/101/Rookies/safety.asp>.

high jumps. It wasn't like being an Airborne Ranger, but at least he could get off the ground. Sometimes you just gotta take what you can get.

Snuffy wanted to impress his buddies, which meant he needed a "challenge." After all, it's no fun jumping unless you're clearing something. Snuffy eyeballed the parking lot for options. Jumping over a half-flattened cardboard box is pretty lame, but then he saw a truly worthy challenge—an unattended shopping cart. Now there was a chance to get some altitude ... or pay the consequences.

BOB VAN ELSBERG
Managing Editor

After positioning the cart, Snuffy pushed off on his skateboard, gaining speed with every foot that went by. He was at maximum velocity when

he crested the incline and man and machine escaped the bounds of gravity. It was breathtaking ... it was graceful ... it was majestic ... but it was a bit low. As gravity overcame velocity, the skateboard's rear truck (wheels) caught the cart's top. This rudely interrupted the board's trajectory, causing it to nosedive and launch Snuffy to complete his airborne odyssey solo.

Snuffy's return to earth was not as graceful as his departure. His "right main landing gear" folded under in ways contrary to design as he hit the parking lot. The impact was hard enough to twist and tear muscles in his right ankle and earn him two weeks of restricted duty. There is an old saying that goes, "Any landing you can walk away from is a good one." Unfortunately, this wasn't one of them.

Skateboarding is fun and challenging, but there are risks involved. Make sure you've got the skills before you seek the thrills. Also, personal protective equipment like helmets and knee, elbow and ankle pads is a good idea. After all, as Snuffy found out, not every landing is a good one.

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