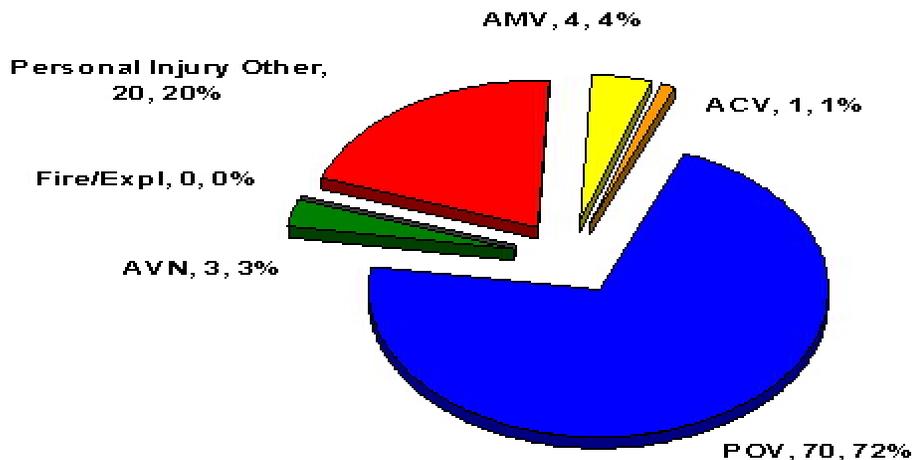


## Safety sends #7 POVs....

Thinking out loud as your Director of Army Safety... As an Army at War, we need every trained Soldier. Roadways continue to take a toll on our formations and we should do something aggressive about it. The Army's Safety Campaign's goal is to make it personal; to engage Soldiers at all levels and make a difference. Get ready for the 4th of July holiday. Here are some round numbers to share with the troops: Our Nation lost more than 58,000 service men and women in the Vietnam War over a 10 year period; by comparison, our Nation averaged 54,000 highway deaths each year! OK, that was 30 years ago, how are we doing now? National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports over 42,000 deaths for 2002 and over 43,000 for 2003. Better, but these numbers are staggering and increasing.... not good! The road is the most dangerous place you can be when not in combat; the #1 cause of all deaths in the US from ages 1-34.

**Over the last 10 years, 55% of the Army's accidental fatalities came from POVs.** In spite of strong leader involvement, this rate remained constant thru 2003 -- a clear indication we are not making a difference. It's time for aggressive change. We need to continue strong leader involvement and also focus on standards, discipline, accountability and most especially training. As an Army, lets take a closer look. In the last 2 years 179 Class A POV accidents resulted in 173 fatalities.



Of these accidents, 144 involved sedans/trucks/vans/SUVs (autos), 33 involved motorcycles/ATVs, and 2 involved tractor-trailers/other. A total of 147 of the military personnel involved in the accidents were operating the vehicle and 56 were passengers. Military drivers listed at fault or made mistakes in 121 (67%) of

these accidents. Excessive speed was the predominant mistake made by military drivers (23%), followed by failure to use required safety equipment (15%), failure to stay alert (15%), use of alcohol (15%), and driving while fatigued (8%). The chart below shows the FY04 break-out of fatalities with CENTCOM deployed Soldiers removed (since they don't use POVs). For the remaining 2/3 of the Army, we've already lost 70 of our highly trained Soldiers to POV deaths; that is nearly 3/4 of all non-deployed accidental fatalities.

Historically this has been a tough area to attack because we perceive there are few control measures and almost no opportunity for supervision. Hope is not a method for better results. As the CSA says, "we need to look at safety from a different perspective." We need to apply training, standards, and discipline to this problem. These time proven control measures will work... but it will not be business as usual.

**Training:** I just returned from a visit to General Motors (GM). They are now in partnership with the US Army to reduce POV accidents! This partnership has nothing to do with products or contracts.... just sharing POV safety. For the last 10 years GM has provided advanced driver skills training to all their employees and family members. This training can be done in one day and will completely change the way you think about driving. The instructors put me and a few staff members thru the ringer teaching "targeting"--where you look is where the vehicle goes; roll over prevention; braking; avoidance and skids. I was shocked at the proficiency level improvement from one day of training and how safely it can be accomplished. Most importantly, this training directly relates to tactical vehicles as well. I drove several vehicles of all types, sizes, conditions; and the techniques crosswalk seamlessly (see attachment).

Using the GM model, I believe we could quickly set up a driving course in every state for minimal costs. GM will "train the trainers" free of charge; initial training can be done in 3 days. These new instructors can be fully trained by practicing on each other in about 3 weeks. Training for our soldiers is all "hands-on" and can be accomplished in a 1000x1000 blacktop area. Permanent skid pads can also be developed and maintained at low costs. Four instructors can train approximately 25 drivers a day. GM is prepared to immediately "train our trainers" at our installations using their equipment. If we like what we see, the "skid monster" assemblies can be purchased for \$7,000 and easily adapted to most front-wheel drive and four-wheel drive vehicles. Please let me know what your thoughts are on this. The Army Safety Center will be staffing a proposal thru our Army leadership to see if we can do something aggressive and different. The end state would be to have at least one driving course set up in every state by the end of the FY. Initial coordination got good support in the building. With the help of the NGB, TAGs, IMA and garrison commanders, this could be done simultaneously rather than concurrently. We will also explore possible insurance reductions for participants.

**For now**, the Safety Center Website "POV Toolbox" link has a wealth of material. We're making the keychain size Breathscan tubes available everywhere; this buddy system can help sober drivers get the keys from impaired Soldiers. ASMIS-1 POV module is really gaining momentum -- gets leaders engaged with subordinates in trip planning and risk management . . . over 8000 users & only 1 Soldier in an accident (was not the driver). This tool could be implemented as a standard for every Soldier going on pass or leave.

I will share more soon on standards, discipline, and accountability. We are checking the "legal traps" first. Our Army needs to look hard at how we are addressing failures of both individuals and their leadership. When was the last time we had a line of duty "No" for a Soldier not wearing a seatbelt? When we wanted to send a signal with DUIs, we pulled disciplinary action to a higher level. Maybe a Soldier caught without a seatbelt "on or off post" needs to see the battalion commander.

**Final thoughts:** Holidays are coming and Troops have money for new vehicles (especially motorcycles). AAFES, for example, has over 4900 motorcycles, cars, and trucks awaiting delivery to our Soldiers. Over the last 2 years there were 34 people involved in the 33 motorcycle accidents, one was a passenger. Military drivers of motorcycles were at fault or made mistakes in 22 of the 33 motorcycle accidents (66%): excessive speed (36%), failure to use required safety equipment (18%), use of alcohol and inadequate planning (9% each). Take a hard look -- make POV/ motorcycle fatalities personal--make a difference. **We are an Army at war.... an Army that cares!**

Joe Smith, BG  
Director of Army Safety

# **U.S. Army looks to GM to help reduce fatal motor vehicle crashes**

*Monday, June 7, 2004*

**BY JOHN PORRETTO**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. Army is teaming up with General Motors Corp. to help reduce the number of crashes involving soldiers in their own cars and trucks, accidents that kill the equivalent of an Army company each year.

Statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that 202 service members died in private automobile crashes in fiscal 2003. Sixty-nine of the deaths involved Army personnel.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last year challenged all branches of the military to cut the rate of preventable accidents and fatalities, including traffic deaths, by at least 50 percent by 2005.

The GM-Army effort announced Monday includes advanced driver training that can be duplicated on Army bases and a 45-minute safe-driving video that will be required viewing for all Army personnel.

"We're trying to aggressively attack this problem," said Brig. Gen. Joseph A. Smith, commander of the U.S. Army Safety Center at Fort Rucker, Ala. "We're looking for lessons that have already been learned that the Army might benefit from."

GM's safe driving program was developed in 1995 to train employees in collision prevention techniques while promoting courtesy and cooperation on the road. Messages about seat belt use and the dangers of impaired driving are an integral part of the program.

Smith said he'll spend the next couple of days visiting GM safety facilities, meeting with traffic safety experts and experiencing firsthand the automaker's advanced driver training.

He said his military counterparts also were searching for ways to improve personal driving and that the various branches typically meet once every few months to share ideas and information.

In the Army, the soldier most likely to die in a motor vehicle crash is a male between the ages of 19 and 24 -- also a high-risk group in the general population, the government said.

The Army said a peak time for crashes is the last six to 12 hours of a three-day pass, when a soldier may be driving aggressively to get back to base in time for formation.

At Fort Campbell, Ky., returning 101st Airborne Division soldiers from Iraq were encouraged during post-deployment briefings earlier this year to adhere strictly to traffic rules and avoid drinking and driving.

Counselors warned soldiers' spouses in separate briefings it can be difficult for soldiers to follow traffic rules at home after a year of plowing over curbs in Humvees and using other erratic driving techniques acceptable on some bustling streets in Iraq. Family members were told to emphasize the importance of safe driving to the soldiers.

Fort Campbell has a posted sign indicating the number of days without a traffic fatality among soldiers. After 101 days without a fatality, soldiers are rewarded with a day of unscheduled activities.

A policy is under review at the base that would prohibit soldiers from talking on cell phones while driving.