

## **Safety Sends #4 Be Safe - Make It Home**

*The Safety Campaign is off and running; you can feel the energy across the Army!*

*Unfortunately, we had another tough week.... got to get everyone to pull harder on the rope...*

**During the week of 23 to 29 April 2004, the Army reported eleven Class A accidents -- two aviation and nine ground. The results -- loss of 10 soldiers, a permanent total disability, and two life- threatening injuries.**

- Aviation fatalities:
    - Three soldiers died when a UH-60 crashed while attempting to perform IIMC procedures. Inadvertently flying into fog or clouds is developing into an accident trend, see Feb Flightfax on our website for more information.
  - Ground fatalities:
    - Seven POV accidents with five fatalities and one permanent disability. One initial report has a vehicle speeding in excess of 110 miles per hour, crashed and burned to the point that we are having difficulty confirming seat belt use.
    - A HMMWV was hit from behind by a POV... resulting in the HMMWV hanging off a bridge. SM attempted to get out of the HMMWV, fell into the river and drowned.
    - During convoy operations, the driver of a PLS was unable to stop, hit the vehicle to his front and resulted in fatal injuries to the driver.
- Bullet summaries of each accident this FY are attached

***Over the last 10 years POVs have accounted for 56% of all accidental deaths in our Army. Somehow this number is not getting the attention of our leadership. Here are some sound bites that may help frame the issue as the Army Safety Campaign moves down the road...***

\* 1/2 of the Army's accidental losses each year occur on the highways. A dead soldier is lost combat power.... regardless of how he or she dies. Preventing POV accidents directly impacts

\* Age group 17 to 24 is clearly the highest risk population. Over 47% of the Army falls in this category of drivers

\* Key factors in POV and motorcycle deaths remain unchanged: fatigue, speeding, failure to use seat belts or motorcycle helmets. IF we start a trip rested, buckled up and don't speed... chances of dying on the road are reduced exponentially

\* Soldiers are returning from deployments in unprecedented numbers, they have lots of money to buy something that goes fast, and have not been behind the wheel for over a year. They under-appreciate the impact of fatigue and may have negative habit transfer from "mobility equals survivability." AAFES estimates their sales of motorcycles for returning soldiers at over 4,000 vehicles.

\* Last year was our worst in the last 10... this year's numbers are exceeding 2003. We must use all the tools available to increase awareness.... ASMIS POV & POV toolbox on the safety center website; click it or ticket; licensing programs on our installations; dynamic safety briefings using multimedia; and most important good ole leader involvement.... "the oak tree counseling" at the platoon level.... where the platoon sergeant gets everyone "under a tree" and says, "nobody's going anywhere till we talk about what everybody's doing this weekend."

**Vignettes** -- This week we will focus on privately owned vehicle (POV) trends. Education, accountability, and constant mentorship are essential elements in the prevention of POV accidents. Here are a few recent examples why we are using the theme, *Be Safe, Make it home.... wherever you are...*

\* Three soldiers were returning home from a night on the town..... none made it home. They were celebrating their redeployment..... each had at least a six-pack before midnight. At 0130, the operator driving approximately 65 mph on a two lane, non-divided highway fell asleep... the vehicle crossed lanes and struck a concrete abutment. The passenger in the front seat was killed when the left front wheel was driven through the floor and into the passenger compartment. The passenger in the rear was killed when he was ejected from the vehicle and impacted the concrete wall supporting the overpass. The operator was killed when he exited the vehicle and was so disoriented that he stepped into the road and was struck by a passing car. **Fatigue, speed, alcohol no seatbelt**

\* Two young Soldiers had spent the weekend at the beach and stayed beyond their pre-planned departure time.... they didn't make it home. Leaving late Sunday night for a 250 mile trip home, they took a the two lane back road to avoid the police.....the accident occurred at approximately 0230, less than 20 miles from the installation. At a high rate of speed on a straight away, the operator apparently fell asleep, veering off the highway, hitting a tree and then rolling the vehicle several times. Both Soldiers were killed when ejected from the car "**Fatigue, Speed and no seatbelt**"

\* Two National Guard Soldiers were returning home following a weekend drill.... they didn't make it home. The soldiers were a father and son in the same Guard unit. Both had as little as 1.5 hours of rest in the previous 24 hour period. The driver fell asleep and struck oncoming traffic. Both father and son were killed. "**Fatigue**"

\*A soldier was traveling at a high rate of speed when he lost control of his motorcycle and struck a tree 300 feet off of the road. The SM was not wearing a

helmet and had not taken the defensive motorcycle driving course. He was killed in the accident. **"Motorcycle, speed, no helmet"**

\*Two soldiers were racing late-model Mitsubishi vehicles on a highway with passengers onboard when one struck a civilian flatbed truck being used for road work. The second vehicle then struck the first vehicle from behind. Four occupants were killed. A post-crash fire rendered the bodies unidentifiable at the scene. **"Speed"**

**Tool kit highlight** - POV Tool Box: The toolbox provides "instant expertise" for commanders, leaders, and non-commissioned officers' with examples and proven tools that attack the primary hazards which kill our soldiers in POV and motorcycle accidents. Fixing personal accountability is key and the Motorcycle Operator Agreement (A sample is located in the POV tool box) is a great place to start. It is an Individual "Responsibilities Agreement" signed by the soldier intending to operate a motorcycle or ATV. It can be easily modified if a leader wants to do something similar for high risk soldiers and other high risk vehicles. The Tool Box also discusses "wind down" time, rest after extended duty before long drives, pre-trip check lists, and other resources for a commander's POV accident prevention program. Again, not a silver bullet, just another tool for your tool kit: <https://safety.army.mil/home.html>. Driver training is an area we have not leveraged. I will be visiting GM to assess their driver training program and track. We are already developing a proposal for Army leadership to consider.

**Final thought.** In an attempt to look at our safety program from a different perspective, The Safety Center has been working with industry. Four things came across loud and clear and may be helpful in your programs:

- \* **The safety message must be driven from the top... but success measured at the bottom**
- \* **Without individual accountability, a safety program has no teeth and therefore is ineffective**
- \* **Safety must be part of your culture.... not a constraint.**
- \* **Don't measure it if you aren't going to use it.**

In his recent P4 to senior leaders, the CSA directed the TIG to measure the success of the safety campaign plan in 90 days. This will be at the beginning of 4th Qtr. Our goal is to help you get the message to the junior leaders where success will be measured. The DAS has the Army staff reviewing accountability processes. The safety center is working hard to "connect the dots" with all data bases in the Army and make sure we are measuring the right things and getting after near misses.

Thanks again to each of you for *Being Safe and bring em home.....*

Joe Smith  
Director of Army Safety