

GroundWarrior

Marine Corps Ground Force Preservation & Readiness

Vol. 7, Issue 1



» **Warrior
Preservation**
An Interview with the ACMC

» **Are Marines
Trained to Jump?**

» **Seeing Friendlies
at Night**

Mishaps waste lives, time, and resources. This magazine's goal is to make Marines aware of mishaps and hazards that have been experienced and identified by fellow Marines. The study of these lessons learned heighten awareness and identify tools that all Marines can use to avoid similar mishaps and mitigate risks.

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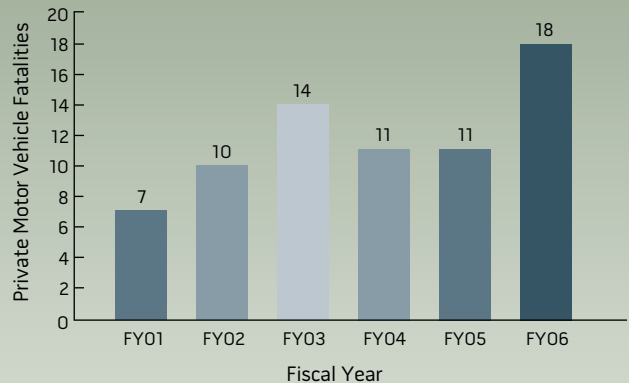
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By the Numbers

How mishaps are affecting our operational readiness

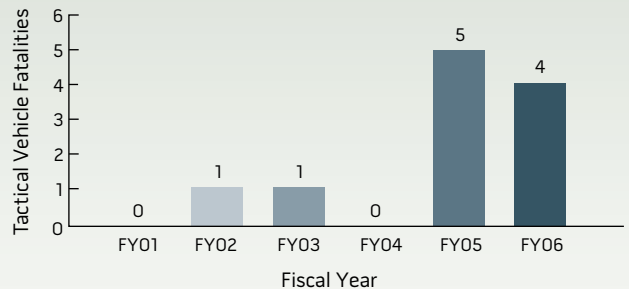
Vehicle mishaps, whether on liberty or operationally, have resulted in some of the highest mishap fatality rates in recent years. Below, the numbers compare the first quarter of FY06 to the last five years.

Private Motor Vehicle Fatalities 1st Quarter of the Year by Fiscal Year

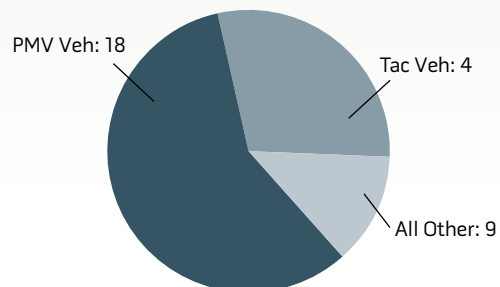


Tactical Vehicle Fatalities 1st Quarter of the Year by Fiscal Year

[note]: Although current tactical vehicle mishaps are less than FY05, these two years yielded the highest rates in the 10 previous years.



Mishap Fatalities FY06 1st Quarter



From the Director

Headquarters Marine Corps Safety Division



Marines,

When Marines graduate from a recruit depot or officer candidate school, they are transformed from the individuals who entered the Marine Corps several months earlier. Marines are trained warriors, and, with some additional schools, they are capable of doing amazing things on the battlefield.

Marines always have had this capability. However, especially recently, they have been leaving these skills at the front gate when they go on leave and liberty. Off-duty motor-vehicle and motorcycle mishaps continue to be the biggest killers. History will continue to repeat itself if the Marine Corps does not change the way it looks at these senseless deaths. Treating Marines as warriors should not change once they turn in their weapons.

Leaders have been facing the same mishaps throughout the last several years just as they have faced the same enemy on patrols. To combat the enemy in the form of insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, Marines have developed tactics to respond to IEDs and ambushes. It's time to start translating the way we look at the enemy into how we look at safety issues. Like the enemy on the battlefield, our Marines are being taken away from their families and us. We need to get serious about keeping them alive, whether fighting through an ambush in Iraq or driving 500 miles home to their family.

As leaders, we establish SOPs in the form of immediate actions to respond to IEDs or ambushes on a patrol route. Similarly, we need to give our Marines SOPs and reactions for going out for some beers or driving home on annual leave. Marines in combat have a react force to request if an enemy is beyond their capabilities. In garrison, the react force is a Marine in the barracks assigned as a designated driver for those stuck out in town with no ride home. Marines travelling more than 500 miles by vehicle should check in with their fire-team leaders along the route until they reach home.

These updates are just like our warriors on the battlefield calling in checkpoints while on patrol to higher. It works in combat, so why wouldn't it work on liberty? This is intrusive leadership, but, with giving our Marines freedoms, we also need to take care of them to the same degree that we give them these freedoms.

When we take our Marines to war, we are very meticulous as to how we care for them. Inspections are conducted to make sure they have water, fuel for trucks, ammo for weapons, and proper body armour. Leaders should draw parallels to when their Marines are going on liberty. Take care of your own by having your team leaders do route recons for long trips home. Give your Marines "ROE" cards that tell them how to contact a cab or buddy back at their barracks if they get stuck at a bar without a designated driver. We don't send our Marines out to combat without a MEDEVAC plan or the instructions for calling a react-force.

We need to take that mentality back to garrison and make sure our Marines are getting the same protection. If we don't protect our own, we are going to allow them to make the same decisions that keep resulting in drunk Marines driving off the road. A pre-planned stop between a leave destination and base with a required call-in may prevent your Marine from pushing the limits of a lengthy motorcycle ride.

This is all "warrior preservation," and you will see it's the theme of our new safety campaign. The same tactics, techniques and procedures we use to preserve our warriors in the air and on the ground in Iraq have similarities to how we should operate from home bases. We are sending our Marines out of the friendly lines when we send them to the bars in Jacksonville or on a road trip to Las Vegas. Our Marines are warriors everyday, not just in the sands of Afghanistan and Iraq. They need to be taken care of as warriors and taught to think with the warrior mindset, each and every day.

Semper Fi,
Fred Wenger III
Col Fred Wenger



GroundWarrior





« LCpl Arturo Gomez, a team leader with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, leads his Marines down a slope while searching for a concealed position in which to hide from mock indirect fire during a live-fire training exercise at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center in 29 Palms, Calif.

Photo by Cpl Antonio Rosas

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ON THE COVER

« LCpl Richard J. Googe, of Deerfield Beach, Fla., an 81mm mortarman, adjusts the mortar sights during a fire mission aboard Forward Operating Base Hit, Iraq.

Photo by Sgt Richard D. Stephens

From the Editor

Marines,

With my first version of the *Ground Warrior*, I changed the format to make it more Marine-friendly. I also wanted to tell more of your stories from the field and show more of what was going on in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the very important training leading to deployments.

Based on your feedback and other circumstances, I have been given the opportunity to incorporate three major changes. The magazine has a new layout, even more professional, with the same unique features and standard columns that tell stories from the field. Second, I have been able to increase the distribution, which means that more Marines will get to see the magazine and learn those hard lessons that don't need repeating. Finally, you will see this is a slightly shorter magazine, but an increased number of issues each year will make up for this change. You may even get more than a magazine some issues (e.g., a good motivational poster for your barracks, shop, or squad bay accompanies this issue).

These changes are all done with the same mission as before. Here, with the voice of the *Ground Warrior*, Marines can share their mishaps and near-mishaps in hopes we can prevent recurring incidents. Leaders, be sure to forward me stories of your hard chargers, so we can recognize their actions each issue.

As I sit back in the rear, and you are forward fighting the good fight, make sure you drop me an e-mail or letter. Marines want to read your story, and you, in turn, will help protect your own.

Semper Fi,



Capt Billy Edwards, USMC
Ground Warrior Editor

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The *Ground Warrior* seeks your submissions

If you have witnessed or participated in an operation that involved a mishap or near-miss, submit your story, long or short, so we can learn from one another.

- By E-mail: SAFE-GrndWarrior@navy.mil or william.g.edwards@navy.mil
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Submissions can be completely anonymous, as the *Ground Warrior* is not used to blame Marines. We just want to teach the hard lessons.

Your submissions
help protect your own



Letters to the Editor

Readers,

The Ground Warrior staff always is looking for your feedback and submissions, good or bad.

Contact the GW via e-mail: SAFE-GrndWarrior@navy.mil —Ed

Reproducing *Ground Warrior*

I am currently the unit safety officer and am interested in getting an electronic copy of the weapons clearing procedures and weapon condition codes found in the Winter 2005 issue.

We would like to make posters and post them in the armory. Thanks for any help you can give us with this project.

SSgt Francisco B Glenn

Group Safety Officer
3D Marine Logistic Group
Camp Kinser, Okinawa, Japan

Our CO recently read the article, “How I Shot a Friend,” [Winter 2005] that he felt needs to be read by all the Marines here on Okinawa. I am asking permission to scan it into a PDF file and send it via e-mail to all of our safety managers to distribute within their commands.

John Williams, ASC, CSS
III MEF Safety Manager

[note]

Marines, *Ground Warrior's* articles and materials are free for safety use. Please give credit to the magazine when reproducing. Articles and materials from *Ground Warrior* are on the HQMC, Safety Division website: <http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/sd/index.htm> and the Naval Safety Center site: <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/media/ground-warrior/default.htm>. Text and some PDF versions can be downloaded at your convenience. You can also google *Ground Warrior* to find the sites.

Combat Arms Earplugs (CAEs)

Assure Marines have received the information [Summer 2005], requiring them to carry combat arms earplugs when wearing the utility uniform.

LtCol Jon “Mac” MacCartney, USMC
HMM-774/Naval Safety Center FWD Iraq

[note]

This is the addition to the uniform order, MCO P1020.34G (para. 7004):

1. Marines in a training/combat environment are required to carry double-ended CAEs (NSN 6515-01-466-2710) as part of their tactical combat utility uniform. When not in use, CAEs should be maintained inside their protective case inside their utility uniform pockets, or attached to their outer tactical vest or flak jacket while in a training or tactical environment (to include combat).
2. Marines, especially forward deployed Marines serving in combat environments, shall be trained in the proper use and maintenance of CAEs. Commands shall provide hearing-readiness training annually. Training should emphasize the total risk reduction associated with the proper use of available CAEs and other state-of-the-art protective-hearing equipment.



» 1stLt Frank Cardamone, convoy commander, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Headquarters Group, displays the earplugs Marines wear during missions.

Photo by Cpl Heidi E. Loreda

Interview with the ACMC

Story by Capt Billy Edwards, *GW Editor*

I recently had a chance to interview the Assistant Commandant (ACMC) about the “Warrior Preservation” Campaign. General Magnus just had finished presiding over the first Executive Safety Board (ESB) for Fiscal Year 2006. The ESB is a full-day meeting of general officers from the major commands that meet each quarter to discuss safety topics and make major policy decisions. One of the new items discussed during the ESB was the new force preservation campaign, and I sat down with the ACMC to get his take on what this means to Marines.

✂ General Robert Magnus, the assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, speaks to Marines with III Marine Expeditionary Force. Gen Magnus ate breakfast with the Marines and spent time addressing issues on Okinawa and answering questions about his military career.

Photo by LCpl C. Lindsay



GW: Is “Warrior Preservation” just a new way to make the “safety” word more palatable to those Marines who have a negative attitude toward safety?

ACMC: The campaign plan is entitled “Warrior Preservation,” because it’s about much more than safety. Our business is fighting wars and our main effort as Marines is warfighting excellence. The very kinds of Americans who join the Marine Corps are not risk averse. We carefully train and equip them, beginning with recruit and officer-candidate training. Then they go through unit-cohesion training, and then they go to war. When they go to war, they don’t do things stupidly. Bad things happen in war. And because of our continuous need to engage the enemy and take necessary risk to do so, mishaps occur in the operational theatre. It’s amazing how Marines perform so skillfully in war — both individually and in small or large teams. As an organization, we haven’t been skillful in determining how to get Marines to incorporate the same professional and mature behavior that makes them successful in theatre into their activities at home stations and bases, particularly when not on duty.

GW: How should Marines, as warriors, change their risky behavior? Or is it the same as in combat?

ACMC: It’s the same warriors who go swimming when they are intoxicated and who go driving a motorcycle at 100 mph. They never would exhibit such risky behavior with their fellow Marines on a training range or in a combat zone — it would compromise their ability to accomplish the mission. The idea of warrior preservation is to apply the mindset and core values of a Marine at battle to all life’s situations. This is

the true sense of being a warrior, to uphold your mindset and core values at all times.

GW: As leaders, how should we explain this to our Marines?

ACMC: Every Marine, whether an MTRV, A-driver, helicopter air crewman, tank gunner, or infantryman, understands [safety]. You don't need to talk to them about it on the battlefield. We have used a different language to talk to them about safety off the battlefield, and that's wrong. The message is, "There is a responsibility of the individual to the team, and the team and the leader have responsibility to the individual — it's how the wolf pack succeeds, by engaging all members of the pack in activities and developing individual pack members in support of the pack."

I visit Marines almost every week at Bethesda (National Naval Medical Center), who feel a deep sense of embarrassment, in many cases, that they have been wounded in combat and no longer are able to support their team. Why do Marines not feel the same way when they go on liberty, and display risky behavior, and, in many cases, get hurt or killed, so they can't support their team?

The answer is, I think, because we are approaching events on and off the battlefield in different ways, when we should be approaching them in the same way. After all, we're always warriors, 24-7-365. We not only have to use the right words, but we have to use the right way to imbue them with this sense of leadership and active teamwork. There always is a responsibility to the unit.

GW: Whose job is it to make sure we consider safety/warrior preservation once we are executing the mission?

ACMC: We're again talking about the wolf and the wolf pack. Clearly, each individual Marine needs a sense of what is the right thing to do to protect the team, to protect himself, and to keep the unit ready. It's the leader's responsibility, whether as the fire team leader, platoon commander, or company commander, to perform over-watch on less experienced Marines when other Marines, in many cases, are intentionally doing things that are not safe. A responsibility chain connects a Marine with the



⚔ Colonel Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., commanding officer of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), gives a brief rundown on his unit's ongoing counterinsurgency efforts to General Robert Magnus, aboard Forward Operating Base Hit, Iraq.

Photo by Cpl Christopher S. Vega

troop leader at all levels, and that responsibility becomes more and more important the lower down you are toward the tactical level. A regimental commander only can do so much about what 2ndLt Magnus or LCpl Magnus is actually going to do on liberty.

GW: What do you mean by Marines doing things that are "intentionally unsafe"? Should Marines do these things, or should they make decisions to avoid these acts?

ACMC: Running across the street in Haditha is not safe. In many cases, though, it's a lot safer than not running across the street. The answer is we have to learn how to do this inherently dangerous thing. In a snapshot, we must understand how to do risk management, just like we do resource management. We have to make sure we have the right kind of fires, the right kind of equipment, and the right kind of preparation before we cross the line of departure. Marines need to do this when we get in a vehicle and swoop out the gate to go visit a girlfriend 200 miles away, then return by the following morning. Would we do those kinds of things routinely with our team, with our wolf pack, on the training range, or in combat? Or, is what we are

doing when we're off duty different from what we do as a Marine on duty?

GW: What do you want to tell the Marines for their next Friday afternoon liberty formation?

ACMC: What Gen. Lejeune would want each Marine — not only the leader but the Marine buddies — saying to one another is, when it's three lance corporals going in three different directions on liberty, each has a responsibility to the others to come back in as good or better condition than when they left. Whether it's crossing the street in Haditha, or going out on liberty in California, North Carolina, or Japan, Marines have a responsibility to one another.

When I visit a wounded corpsman who has lost his leg, he has a sense of having failed because he is unable to go back and support his platoon. Marines who go off on liberty, get arrested, get hurt, or get killed, have failed their families, but who will feel the loss? Will they be able to support the team who would give their lives for them on the battlefield? I want to see the same sense of responsibility between individual Marines and the teams that they eat, sleep, and go to war with, whether they are coming in or going out the gate. **GW**

Negligent Discharges: A Momentary Lapse

Story by Staff Writer

Before each live-fire, Marines repeat the Four Safety Rules to reiterate the importance of weapons handling. Remembering these rules will keep your rounds headed in the direction of the enemy. It only takes a momentary failure to cause a mishap, as revealed in the following examples. Each round down range has the ability to take a life; fortunately, none of the victims in these mishaps died.

“Shot in the Foot”

A Marine unit had set up a squad live-fire attack on a range with pop-up targets and some challenging and realistic terrain. At one point in the attack, the Marines would seek cover in a trench and then maneuver down range in an assault.

Each squad completed several dry-runs before live rounds were incorporated. The RSO gave a thorough safety brief to all of his Marines, including discussion of the weapons conditions and safety rules. The Marines were set up for success.

When the mishap Marine was on the range, his fire team stopped in the trench to lay down a base of fire. Once instructed to assault forward, the mishap Marine tripped

on the edge of the trench. Unfortunately he had not taken the proper individual actions before moving. The Marine’s weapon still was on “fire,” and his finger was on the trigger. When he tripped, he oriented his weapon on himself and, as he fell, without control, discharged a round from his M16-A2. The round went through the top of his foot and out the bottom, breaking several bones and ligaments.

Sometimes, individual actions are the root and direct cause of a mishap. Little could have been done to stop this one. The Marine was not found to have shot himself on purpose. However, he should have been incorporating each of his safety rules. Had he shifted his weapon to safe upon moving, he would not have shot himself. Had the Marine kept his finger straight and off the trigger, he might never have known the weapon was not on “safe.” Had the Marine kept the weapon pointed down range, he might have only fired poorly at the targets. Marines should be reminded that the safety rules serve a purpose, and negligence, in the form of a momentary lapse, could have serious consequences.



Every Marine is a rifleman.

Unlike personnel in the other services, each Marine is instilled with ideals of professionalism when handling weapons. It is our job, as Marines, to set the example and handle weapons safely at all times.

« LCpl Landon Tally, infantryman, weapons platoon, Command Logistics Element, Marine Central Command, fires his M16-A2 Service Rifle during a “Presentation of Weapons” live-fire drill.

Photo by Cpl Matthew J. Apprendi

» LCpl Anthony Johnson runs with his Mk153 SMAW rocket launcher alongside a building to make an entry point for the Marines of 3d Platoon Charlie Co., 1/3.

Photo by Sgt Clinton Firstbrook

“Counting to Five”

A Marine SMAW gunner is conducting live-fire training with his unit. As part of a weapons platoon, he is tasked to another platoon for the actual live-fire portion. During the shoot, he fires his spotting round before firing his rocket down range. This SMAW gunner is very sharp, because he knows he fired all five of his spotting rounds.

[Each SMAW rocket comes with a magazine of five 9mm spotting rounds. These are tracer rounds that are shot with the spotting rifle. The rocket-launching tube is bore sighted to the spotting rifle to assure the rocket hits the same place as the spotting rounds.]

The Marine SMAW gunner returns to his platoon, sure that his weapon is clear, because he counted the five spotting rounds, and there is no more rocket. The weapon surely is in condition IV. The Marine returns to the bivouac site, and, several hours later, weapons maintenance is conducted. The Marine SMAW gunner does not clear his weapon that assuredly is in condition IV. However, once he starts cleaning his weapon, he inadvertently fires the spotting rifle. The supposedly clear weapon discharges, putting a hole in both hands of his fellow Marine, who is sitting across the room.

Lesson learned: Always know, without uncertainty, what condition your weapon is in. This Marine SMAW gunner and his leadership had several chances to assure his weapon was clear. One cannot assume he has fired all of the rounds. These assumptions can hurt or kill your fellow Marine.

“An Armory, A Marine, Ammunition, And a Weapon”

A Marine, designated 2111, small arms repairer/technician, handles weapons as his job. An armory issues weapons without inspecting them. One month later, a weapon



is drawn from that armory for security missions. The ammunition is lost.

Several months later, the armory conducts an inventory and finds a weapon in condition I. Problem: Marine and the armory don't realize the weapon is in condition I. The Marine performs a function check and shoots himself in the finger. Function check complete. The weapon is capable of doing its job, based on the Marine's destroyed finger. The Marine is incapable of doing his job, based on the destroyed finger. The armory finds the ammunition. **GW**

Lessons Learned: Individual Actions

1. When moving and not firing:
 - Keep weapon on “safe.”
 - Keep finger straight and off the trigger.
 - Keep weapon pointed at the enemy/down range.
2. Make sure SMAW gunners know condition of the entire weapon and, most importantly, the spotting rifle.
3. Treat every weapon as if it is loaded, even if you are an expert.

Seeing Friendlys at Night

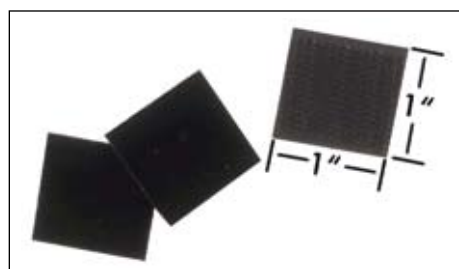
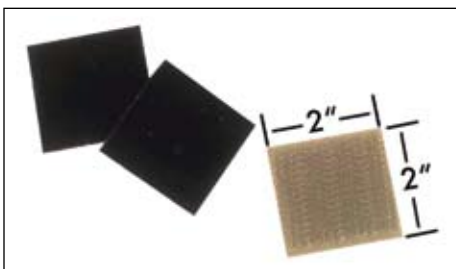
Story by Dave Hochman

Marines in Iraq are operating constantly, which includes operations at night. In close environments, and with limited visibility, such as urban terrain, Marines need to be able to identify their fellow Marines to avoid friendly-fire. The use of night-vision goggles and new identifying technology makes it easier to differentiate between friend and foe at night.

Non-hostile fire incidents, commonly known as friendly-fire, are perhaps the most tragic and costly of all potential battlefield mishaps and hazards. In Operation Enduring Freedom, friendly-fire has caused several high-profile combat deaths. During the major combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 2003 – May 2003), friendly-fire incidents had accounted for approximately 18 percent of all combat deaths. This figure represents an improvement over Operation Desert Storm, a conflict in which friendly-fire accounted for 24 percent of U.S. service member casualties. Unfortunately, friendly-fire incidents are a tragic reality of modern warfare, and it is doubtful that fratricide ever can be totally erased; however, it is morally and strategically incumbent upon the powers that be to aggressively confront the issue.

Combat-identification (combat-ID) systems are the primary means by which military forces seek to maximize their operational effectiveness, while simultaneously reducing friendly-fire. According to an Aug. 5, 2005, article on MSNBC.com, "Battling Friendly-Fire," by Michael Moran, "Improvements in command and control systems, training and the deployment of primitive 'blue force tracking' systems, like reflective tape on coalition soldiers, are credited with helping to lower the friendly-fire rate during the push on Baghdad."

Quick Fix, a U.S. Army joint-service program, was initiated after Desert Storm, with the goal of rapidly fielding combat ID systems to protect the warfighter from





⚡ Marines of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit conduct a security patrol outside of Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq.

Photo by Sgt Zachary A. Bathon



⚡ Navy SEAL team personnel conduct special warfare insertion techniques at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, CA. U.S. Navy

Photo by PHC Ted Salois

friendly-fire. The program, available to both the Army and Marine Corps, has been credited with significantly contributing to the reduction of fratricide incidents during recent conflicts. In preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Army issued contracts to Night Vision Equipment Company (NVEC), a unit of DRS Technologies, Inc., for large quantities of these Quick Fix solutions. Essentially, every ground-force element throughout the Army and Marine Corps that has been (or will be) deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan will be equipped with NVEC's combat ID devices, including its thermal identification panels, GloTape™ infrared (IR) reflective material and Phoenix™ infrared beacon, all of which are designed to identify friendly vehicles, equipment and personnel.

As mentioned, one such simple, low-tech, cost-effective device is the NVEC

GloTape™ armband combat identifier for dismounted forces. The armband is 22 inches long, including the 12-inch adjustable Velcro band. When properly fitted around the user's arm, a 10-inch length of IR reflective GloTape™ is exposed. The armband's IR glint can be seen only through night-vision devices or "NVGs." Other GloTape products include U.S. flags, NATO member flags, 1" and 2" square markers, helmet schim markers, unit patches and blood-type identification tags." To the naked eye, GloTape™ appears to be similar to black duct tape in both texture and finish, without a visible reflective glow. However, when illuminated with an infrared source, such as the infrared diode on standard NVGs, a bright reflection can be seen clearly through night-vision goggles at extremely long ranges. When the warfighter dismounts from a vehicle with

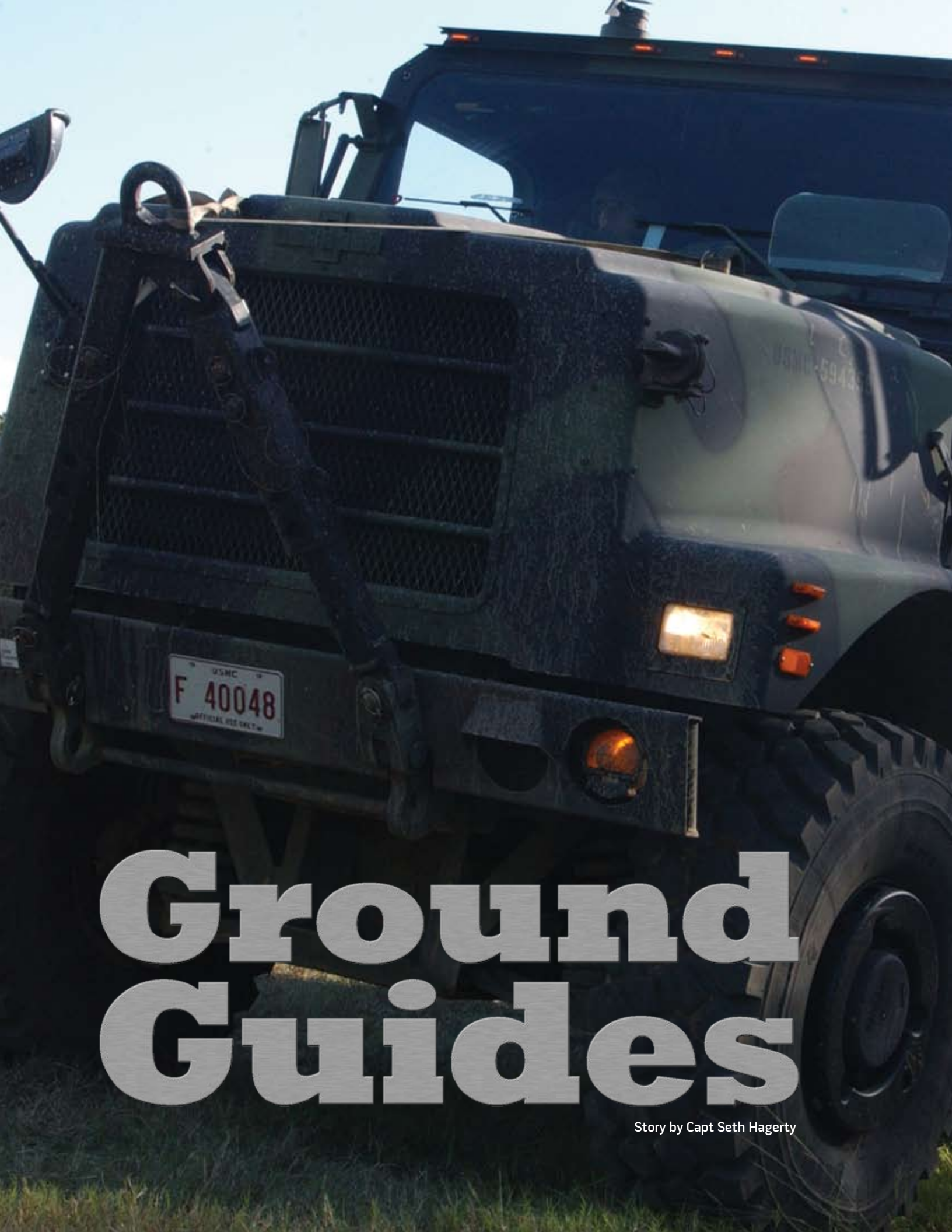


the GloTape™ marker, he easily can ID friendly and enemy forces by using NVGs. Fortunately, the Department of Defense has fielded enough individual-use NVGs among the ground forces in the Army and Marine Corps for the GloTape™ to significantly reduce fratricide rates.

The GloTape™ product is attached to the uniform with an adjustable Velcro hook and pile and is designed to last for an entire year-long deployment. Since the immense amounts of sand and dust can render the Velcro ineffective, warfighters have the option of sewing the GloTape™ directly onto the uniform. Bottom line: The GloTape™ product is the only system in existence that is inexpensive enough to protect every warfighter from the hazard of friendly-fire. **GW**

[For more information, visit <http://www.drs.com> and <http://www.nvec-night-vision.com/>; NSNs are listed with most gear. The 2x2-inch square GloTape™ markers part # is IFF-980-MC22.]

David Hochman is a NJ-based writer, specializing in security, contingency planning, and risk management topics. Mr. Hochman also served as a TOW/Dragon Gunner in the United States Marine Corps Reserves for six years. Contact him at djhochman@davehochman.com.



Ground Guides

Story by Capt Seth Hagerty



Ground guides are essential in areas of limited mobility, visibility, and in non-tactical situations where meeting time hacks are not a matter of life and death. Although rearview mirrors are a basic feature on cars, tactical vehicles, such as HMMWVs, LVSs, and 7-ton trucks, are not equipped with them. Turning maneuvers in a tight space require a ground guide in order to effectively and safely complete the turn. Recently, several ground guides have been killed or injured. Two mishaps in Iraq highlight the dangers associated with dismounting from tactical vehicles and continuing the mission from the ground as a ground guide.

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« An MTVR, medium tactical vehicle replacement, used on Okinawa.

In February 2005, a Marine convoy departed their base of origin in the late evening, en route to another base in Iraq. Upon reaching their destination, the driver of a 7-ton dismantled to serve as the vehicle ground guide. The A-driver of the 7-ton (a licensed driver) would be the driver while it was offloading supplies at the convoy's destination. The A-driver was providing the driver an opportunity to stretch his legs after being on the road for several hours.

After moving several feet forward, the A-driver attempted to apply the brake. However, the driver had left his helmet on the floor of the vehicle, and it now interfered with the ability to stop the vehicle. As the A-driver bent down toward the accelerator and brake to remove the helmet, the 7-ton moved forward and crashed into the rear of another parked 7-ton.

At this moment, the A-driver realized that he could not see his ground guide. He opened the door and yelled for the Marine, then backed the 7-ton several feet to find the Marine slumping between the two vehicles. The driver acting as ground guide had been fatally crushed.

Several critical errors led to this unfortunate incident. The driver acting as a ground guide placed himself between the vehicle and an immovable object—the other 7-ton. The Marine also left his helmet in the vehicle on the floor, near the accelerator and brake. Before applying the brake, the A-driver operating the 7-ton allowed the ground guide to leave his field of vision.

In another incident in Iraq, a Marine was standing next to a HMMWV, speaking with the driver of the vehicle. While the Marines were talking, another Marine was acting as a ground guide for a nearby 7-ton making a three-point turn. The ground guide's position did not allow him to see



that the Marine talking to the HMMWV driver was in the path of the backing 7-ton. It pinned the Marine to the outside of the HMMWV, but, fortunately, he survived.

Again, critical errors resulted in the injury of another Marine. The ground guide did not position himself where he could see the path of the 7-ton. The driver allowed this situation by following the guidance of the poorly positioned ground guide. The Marine standing by the HMMWV remained in the path of the 7-ton and lacked the situational awareness to realize the 7-ton might not stop in time.

Generally, ground guides need to stand in the vehicle's direction of travel. Also, a ground guide always needs to stay in the direct field of vision of the driver or be visible in their mirrors. A good rule of thumb is that if the ground guide can see

the reflection of the driver in the mirror, he is visible to the driver. Furthermore, ground guides never must stand between the vehicle they are guiding and a hard object that does not give an avenue of escape. The optimal place for a ground guide to operate is within the field of vision of the driver but slightly outside the vehicle's direct path of travel. When operating at night and it's tactically feasible, ground guides should use a chemlight or flashlight to direct moving vehicles.

Situations dictate whether the ground guide faces the vehicle or has his back to it. For example, ground guides who are leading their vehicle on a road through a foggy area at night may guide their vehicle with their backs to it. A Marine backing a 7-ton in the motor pool needs to face the vehicle. Ground guides never should run; the potential for tripping on an object and falling in the path of the vehicle increases dramatically. It is recommended that the driver and ground guide both walk the ground, looking for obstacles and hazards where they will be performing a turning maneuver. Situations will dictate whether this maneuver can take place.

Tracked vehicles and material-handling equipment also require ground guides in certain situations. Tracked vehicles utilize

Tips for Ground Guiding

- Stay in the direct field of vision of the driver or be visible in the mirrors.
- Position yourself where you can see the path of the vehicle.
- Learn and properly use hand and arm signals.
- At night, when tactically feasible, use a chemlight or flashlight.
- Do NOT position yourself between the vehicle and an immovable object.



two ground guides whenever operating in a tight space. One ground guide stands in front of the vehicle, and the other stands to the rear. This arrangement allows all angles of movement to be covered and ensures that all potential hazards are observed and avoided.

Material-handling equipment (MHE) operators rely heavily on the ground guides to ensure that forks are aligned to the object they are lifting. In addition, tactical forklifts have extremely limited visibility when carrying large pieces of cargo, such as a quadcon. Ground guides again must ensure they are visible to the MHE operators when they are directing cargo loading and offloading.

A-drivers oftentimes are Marines outside the motor-transport MOS. Most Marines view A-driving as a pointless job that provides them an opportunity to relax. In tactical situations, A-drivers provide security on the passenger side of the vehicle. A-drivers have other serious responsibilities, to include assisting with navigation, observing for potential dangers, ensuring

that the driver is adhering to applicable orders and regulations, and acting as a ground guide.

Potential A-drivers should not be embarrassed to ask motor-transport Marines in their unit to give them a hip-pocket class on ground-guide procedures. All motor-transport Marines learn hand and arm signals at their MOS school. An A-driver who is not familiar with proper hand and arm signals can confuse a driver and increase the risk of a mishap occurring. Units also may have their own local SOPs for hand and arm signals and should assure everyone put into a ground-guide position is capable of being effective.

All Marines, no matter their rank, have the potential to serve as an A-driver and possibly a ground-guide. Knowledge of procedures, maintaining situational awareness, and knowledgeable drivers are the keys to mishap prevention. **GW**

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The ground guide did not position himself where he could see the path of the 7-ton

✧ LCpl Jonathan M. Fisher a motor transportation operator assigned to Motor Transportation Platoon, II MEF (FWD), stands next to one of the 7-ton vehicles he drives.

Photo by Cpl Ruben D. Maestre





Are
Marines

Trained to
JUMP?

Story by MSgt Keith Johnson



✔ Marines from 4th Force Reconnaissance Company, perform parachute operations, from 5000 feet above Kaneohe Bay from a CH-53D helicopter.

Photo by LCpl J. Ethan Hoaldrige

It's a cool Tuesday morning and the anticipation runs high as a young Marine prepares for his first parachute operations since completing basic jump school. His confidence is high, despite the fact 12 months have passed since his last jump. Having attended jump-refresher training on Sunday, he now is going through all the motions the morning of the jump. He attends the jump brief, where the discussion centers on sustained airborne training, aircraft procedures, and parachute-landing falls. The Marine's anxiety builds as the jump draws near.





Once suited up and sitting on the aircraft, he gives complete attention to the primary jumpmaster, who is preparing to give the first jump command. The jumpmaster points at the first stick and shouts, “First stick, unbuckle,” followed by a second command, “First stick, stand up.” With heart pumping and blood flowing, the young Marine stands, turns toward the jumpmaster, and awaits the next command. The young Marine is ready, even though his senses are almost overwhelmed.

Finally, the time comes for the jumpmaster to tap the first Marine and shout, “Go!” The young Marine shuffles rapidly off the C-130’s ramp, counts “1000...2000...3000...4000...,” and prepares to check his canopy. While checking it, the Marine becomes confused: He sees openings in his canopy, something he never saw at jump school. The canopy is moving faster across the ground. Reaching up and grabbing the toggles, the young Marine slowly begins to realize that, by



⤴ Conducting sustainment parachute training from a C-130J with MCI-ID/Es.

⤵ LCpl Erric S. Thompson, a parachute rigger assigned with 2d Air Delivery Platoon, 2d Transportation Battalion, 2d Force Service Support Group, walks with his parachute after jumping out of a CH-53 Super Stallion.

Photo by LCpl Ruben D. Maestre

“Why wasn’t I trained on this parachute system?”

pulling the toggles, he can steer the canopy.

Unfortunately, the young Marine loses his air awareness and fails to prepare to land. He hits the ground on his back. As he lies there in pain, unable to move his legs and waiting for a medevac, he wonders, “What went wrong? Why wasn’t I trained on this parachute system?”

Army Training, Sir

The famous phrase made popular by the movie “*Stripes*” has more truth to it than many people realize. Many Marines today receive formal military occupational specialty (MOS) training via the Army. As they said in the movie, “Army training, Sir.”

At one point, all the services maintained unilateral operational equipment. Marines could attend many of the same Army schools and receive the proper training. In the past 15 years, each service, with clearly separate missions, has developed equipment to meet ever-changing requirements.

A shortfall has come in the training at the formal schooling level. The entry-level Marine training has not kept pace with the equipment development and mission requirements. Marines in several MOSs receive training on equipment that is Army-specific and don’t do any formal training on equipment specifically developed for Marines.

The parachute community is an example of this training gap. Recently, a serious parachute-operation mishap resulted in a Marine being hurt and forced into a medical discharge. The Marine never had received formal training with the parachute systems used in the mishap. He had adequate training to properly exit the aircraft, but, once under canopy, it was completely different from what he had been taught at the formal school. In basic jump school, he was instructed on a parachute system used solely by the Army. The Marine did not know how to properly control the parachute system and made a very hard landing,

» Marines must maintain air awareness while under the canopy, here on MC1-1D/E.

which damaged his spinal cord. This jump was his first one after basic jump school.

Since the Marine Corps has started developing equipment specific to itself, units using equipment such as parachutes or trucks need to ensure their Marines have been trained on the Marine-specific equipment. If the formal school does not provide the training, then the unit needs to provide some form of documented familiarization and practical-application training to ensure their Marines stay safe when using the equipment.

Until the formal-school process is changed to meet Marine Corps requirements on equipment type, it is our responsibility as officers and staff non-commissioned officers to screen the Marines and get a sense of their knowledge and experience. Leaders must take appropriate action to ensure their troops receive the required amount and type of training on Marine Corps-specific equipment. If we don’t provide this training, our young Marines will drive on with the mission and possibly kill or injure themselves or damage the equipment.

The Army does an outstanding job training warriors for the battles of the future, but it may not be able to keep pace with the ever changing requirements and equipment of each service. Marines reporting in for duty and yelling “Marine Corps training, sir,” can hit the road running, prepared to enhance their skills—not learn it for the first time. If their response is “Army training, sir,” then we need to do our part as leaders and train them appropriately. **GW**

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✧ Cpl Nathan T. Dowd, Marine Corps Systems Command computer programmer, cruises along Fleming Road on his motorcycle. Dowd always takes the proper safety precautions, such as wearing a Department of Transportation certified helmet with visor, gloves, boots and reflective vest.

Photo taken by Cpl Nicholas Tremblay

Heavy on the Throttle, Deep Into Trouble

Story by Anonymous Marine

It was a typical Saturday morning in Oceanside, Calif., when my buddy swung by my apartment on his Kawasaki ZX-7R. He wanted me to join him for a ride around town on our motorcycles.

I still was half asleep as I stumbled over to the door and started chatting with him. When he finally had convinced me to come along, I donned a pair of blue jeans and a long-sleeved T-shirt. On my way out the door, I grabbed my leather motorcycle boots, gloves and, of course, my helmet. However, I left my leather jacket behind. The morning California sun was warming things up quickly, and I knew I'd be uncomfortable in no time if I wore that jacket. Besides, we only were going for a short ride.

I felt my bike slip left. Then, I was on my back, sliding down the asphalt.

We started out just cruising around, enjoying the weather, scenery and our motorcycles. When we got to where the highway crossed an interstate, we pulled

over at a gas station to top off our tanks and to figure out what we wanted to do next. Instead of turning around and heading home, we decided to make a day of it; we were going to take the interstate south toward San Diego.

Shortly after we hit the interstate, I suddenly had a strong urge to open up the throttle on my Aprilia RSV 1000 Mille—even though traffic was fairly heavy. At more than 100 mph, I was cutting and weaving in and out of traffic and leaving my friend in the dust. I was picking my way through a cluster of vehicles when I glanced in the next lane over and about 25 feet ahead and saw a highway-patrol car. A check of my speedometer sent a sobering thought flashing through my head, “I’m going to blow right by this cop while doing 150 mph.”

My first instinct was to slow down, so I pulled in the clutch lever and applied the front brake. I guess I pulled too hard because, in the next instant, I felt my bike slip left. Then, I was on my back, sliding down the asphalt. “Oh no, I’m not wearing my leather jacket!” I thought. “This is going to hurt badly!”

After sliding for what seemed like an eternity, I came to a tumbling stop and

instantly was on my feet, walking to the side of the freeway. I remember thinking to myself at the time, “Oh my God, I’m walking!” I then turned my attention to the traffic that had been behind me. Cars in all four lanes were stopped a couple hundred feet from where I had stopped sliding. The drivers thankfully had seen what was happening and had time to slow down.

The highway patrolman I had seen had pulled over, with the car’s lights flashing, so I started walking toward him. It was about this time, as he climbed out of his car and started running toward me, that I felt my first pain. I looked down and saw my shirt was hanging off me by only a few threads, and half my jeans were gone. My injuries included two sprained ankles, two bruised heels, back contusions, and considerable road rash, especially on my knees, elbows, shoulders, and hands. The thin, nylon-mesh, “summer” gloves I was wearing hadn’t held up very good. If I had been wearing my leather jacket and full leather gloves, most of the road rash on my upper body would have been reduced or perhaps eliminated. Thankfully, my helmet had worked as designed, and I didn’t have any head injuries.

I got into an ambulance but not before the patrolman had lectured me on how lucky I was to be alive. Once I reached the local emergency room, doctors quickly cleaned and treated my wounds, which hurt a lot more now than when I had incurred them. They bandaged me up and released me six hours later.

I know I’m lucky to be alive today and for having just minor injuries. The patrolman cited me for speeding faster than 100 mph, which will translate into a hefty fine once I settle at a future court date. On top of that, my insurance rates likely will increase, and, of course, there’s the matter of the damage I did to my motorcycle. That’s going to cost me about \$11,000 for parts—excluding maintenance costs and shop space.

It’s fun and thrilling to fly down the road at a high rate of speed on a motorcycle, but, take it from me, it’s just not worth the consequences. I know—I learned the hard way. **GW**

[The author is a 21-year-old Marine Corps corporal who asked to remain anonymous.—Ed.]



Tales from the Fighting Hole

In the Corps, it's a "fighting" hole, not a "fox" hole. Foxholes are for people who want to hide; fighting holes, on the other hand, are for people who want to fight.

"Tales from the Fighting Hole" is a column dedicated to telling stories from the operational forces. These incidents are unique in that Marines are facing scenarios not duplicated in training. The scenarios present different risks that, if not previously considered, could create a hazard. Our goal with this column is to mitigate some of these risks and to prevent, or "fight," mishaps from recurring.

We welcome your e-mail or letters with information about mishaps you have witnessed while patrolling or driving through the sands of Iraq and Afghanistan. Submissions also are welcomed from those Marines training in the jungles of western Asia or doing humanitarian operations in the storm-destroyed areas of the United States.



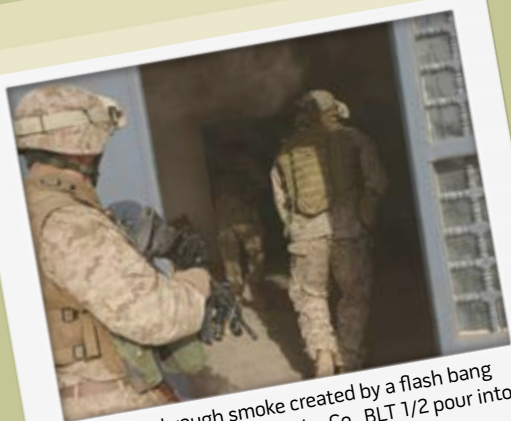
Flash Bangs

The Mk3A2 is an offensive grenade that uses its explosion to shock or stall the enemy. There is very little fragmentation, keeping injuries to a minimum. Marines can use these grenades when clearing a room, and the status of personnel in the room is unknown. In the urban environments of Iraq, where Marines are encountering civilians in their quest to hunt insurgents, the Mk3A2 is a very good tool.

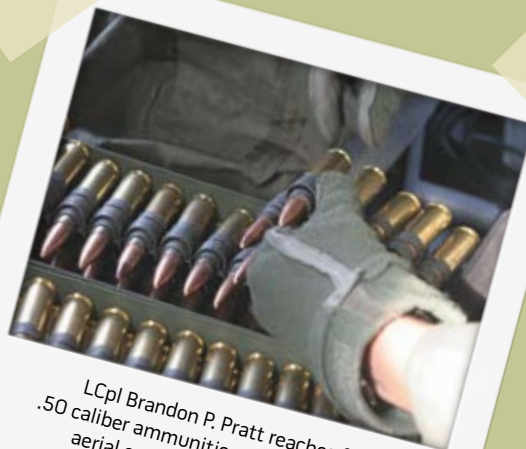
However, Marines do not treat the Mk3A2 with the same care as a normal grenade. Why? Because it's awkward and won't necessarily fit in the standard grenade pouch. Four separate incidents have occurred recently, with injuries to Marines from these relatively benign weapons. Coincidentally, or not, during the same

period, there were no mishaps involving the much more destructive fragmentation grenade. One Marine engaged a Mk3A2 when pulling it from his cargo pocket to pass it to a fellow Marine. The victim lost his index finger. Another Marine lost his fifth digit, or pinky, when holding a flashbang. In two other incidents, one Marine received lacerations to his hip and right hand, and the other suffered a ruptured eardrum.

It's important that Marines handle flashbangs just as fragmentation grenades. Leaders should assure Marines know that anyone in the blast radius may be injured, which behooves everyone to be wary of friendlies. Marines most certainly will be injured if they don't throw the grenade when the spoon is released. Most importantly, leaders need to address their proper use through instruction and practical application before going on deployment. While this preparation should be common sense, the latest string of incidents would seem to indicate otherwise.



Charging through smoke created by a flash bang grenade, Marines from Alpha Co., BLT 1/2 pour into a building in Baghdad, Iraq.
Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks



LCpl Brandon P. Pratt reaches for a belt of .50 caliber ammunition on his way to conduct aerial gunnery training at Ilesuna Island.
Photo by LCpl Scott M. Biscuiti

.50-Caliber Rounds

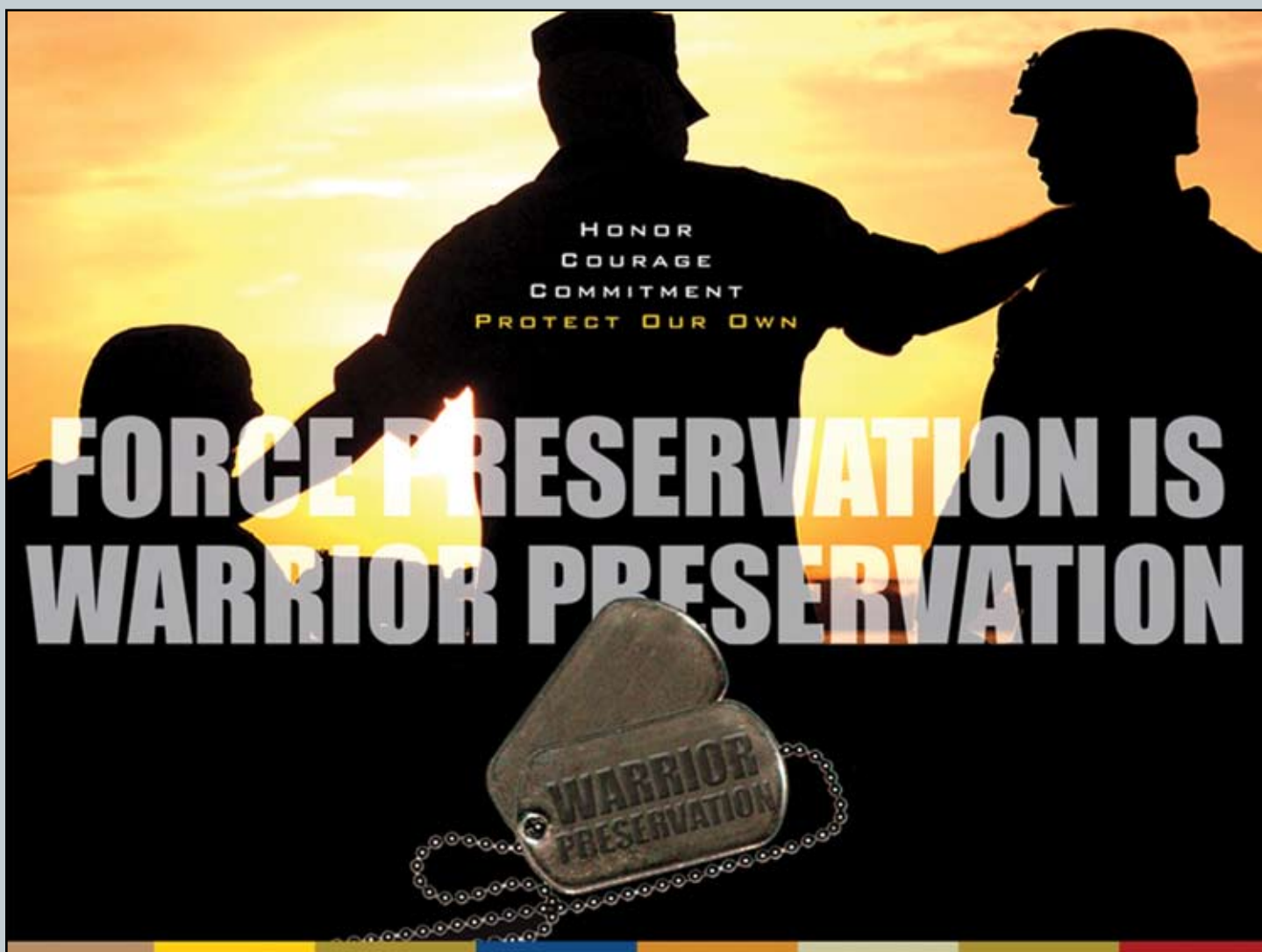
Marines who have been in Iraq know all too well that boredom and a momentary loss of common sense can result in senseless injuries. Several incidents have occurred involving .50-caliber rounds. These rounds seem like very useful tools and toys if removed from their links. However, very few .50-caliber rounds ever should be out of their links; sniper rounds are one exception.

In two events, a Marine or soldier was bored and toying with a .50-caliber round. One Marine was trying to see what hitting the primer of the round with a nail would do. He found out the nail works very similar to a firing pin, except there is no barrel through which the round can go down range. There's also no ejection port through which the round can safely eject the shell. The Marine ended up with some severe injuries to his hands and face. Too bad his NCO was not around to assure him that a nail works very much like a firing pin.

A soldier was working with Marines when he made the same discovery as the above Marine with one slight difference. He was sitting on top of his tank, tapping a .50-caliber round on the tank's hard surface, just as one would tap a pencil or pen in boredom. This soldier decided to use a piece of steel encased in brass and laced with gunpowder. The round exploded, severely injuring his hand. At least, he put an end to his boredom.

Many of us have struggled at disassembling a sand-covered weapon. The lube is all dried, and the pin holes get filled with sand, making it necessary to use a cleaning rod to push out a pin. One individual decided to use a .50-caliber round, and, once again, the results were predictable.

A .50-caliber round should only be used with a rifle or heavy machine gun as a weapon against the enemy. It's not a hammer, a tool to overcome boredom, or a cigar substitute. **GW**



2006 | Warrior Preservation Campaign

The Warrior Preservation

Campaign 2006 calls upon all Marines, from the private leaving boot camp to the company and base commander to reinvigorate the long-standing tradition that Marines take care of their own.

Every Marine must apply the excellence and professionalism expected in combat to all their actions, both on and off duty. Force preservation depends on the full-time combat readiness of the individual Marine.

The goal of the Warrior Preservation Campaign 2006 is to reduce mishaps across the Corps. The campaign outlines three major objectives for improving force preservation across the Corps and reaching our mishap-reduction goal:

Leadership & Mentoring

How do you take care of your Marines? Leaders at all levels must actively engage their Marines and clearly establish performance expectations that include both on-duty and leave and liberty behaviors. Warrior preservation includes unit and individual safety, as well as continuous risk evaluation and hazard mitigation through operational risk management.

Training & Education

Are your Marines always at the ready? When Marines take care of their own by training, equipping and mentoring each other to be selfless in battle yet disciplined in garrison, we are best prepared to serve our Nation.

Structure & Staffing

Is your unit set up to effectively institute risk management for your activities? Are you holding after-action meetings to discuss how an activity must change or could be improved? Select top-quality NCOs to assist in operation of the unit-safety program. Ensure prompt investigation and reporting of mishaps.



Do not operate heavy machinery after drinking.



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