

DRILL BITS

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STOP THE LOSS

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What will it take for Soldiers to learn? We are the best in the world at fighting wars and keeping the peace. We strive to be the best at our technical jobs and stay on the cutting edge of Combative training and other physical activities. Yet we still lose eight Soldiers in off-duty accidents to each Soldier killed on-duty. And the reason, lack of seatbelts, helmets, speed, alcohol and distracted driving.

Here in South Dakota, we lost one of our own to a tragic swimming accident, yet when reviewed, was it an unavoidable situation?

The State of South Dakota and the United States Army has made an investment in you, the Soldier. You matter not only to your family at home, but your family in the Army. We count on you being here, not only for your ability to do your job, but because you matter to us.

Just take the next few steps to keep yourself safe:

Don't drive angry: speed and aggression kills. Statistically speed is involved in a majority of fatal accidents.

Wear your PPE; you wouldn't go to combat without your weapon or IBA, would you? Why jump into traffic, that can be just as hazardous as combat without every bit of protection you can?

Speaking of weapons, many of us own hand and long guns, for various reasons. Use them as intended only, train with them in a safe and prudent manner, and never mix firearms and alcohol.

Alcohol: did you know that the extended use of alcohol is the leading cause of perpetual stupidity. That's right, people do stupid things when using booze, we've all seen it. Yet too many

time we watch one of our buddies fall into that "too far gone" drunkenness and we do nothing about it. We might take the keys, but that doesn't stop him from walking blindly into traffic.

And don't take anything on the road for granted.

Stay alert, stay smart, stay alive. Take care of your battle buddies. They will take care of you.

Take a moment each day to think about what you can do to prevent a tragedy.



THANKS GIVING: FOOD PREP SAFETY IS A PRIORITY

Many years ago, as an adolescent, my family enjoyed a huge family holiday meal with relatives coming out of the wood-work. It was a fantastic time, with stories and anecdotes being told in nearly every room.

But following the meal, one by one, people began to complain of illness's, stomach cramps, headache and flu like symptoms. Eventually, everyone

was sick, except my mother, who coincidentally was dieting and had not eaten several of the more fattening items.

Later it was determined through the process of elimination that the pumpkin pie was the only common denominator amongst those that were ill.

At first we thought Mom has trying to poison us, but why, espe-



cially her favorite child, me. It was finally agreed upon that it was an accidental food poisoning and all of us recovered. But to this day, food prep must be taken seriously. For more information, visit the CDCs website on how to Safely make a holiday meal.

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/turkeytime/>



HOLIDAYS ARE HIGH RISK PERIODS FOR ACCIDENTS

As the holiday season approaches, everyone, military and civilian, will be exposed to one of the greatest hazards on the road; The drinking driver. That driver could be in the car in front of, behind or beside you. It may even be you.

While alcohol related accidents are on the decline across Amer-

ica, one fatal accident is too many.

If you are driving, stay alert and aware of who is around you and be ready for immediate action to avoid an accident. If you are going to drink, stay home, designate a sober driver or call a cab/friend/relative for a sober ride home.

A DUI can be a

career decision, an accident can be a fatal one. Don't take the chance.

If you observe a vehicle driving erratically, keep your distance, if possible let them get ahead of you and call your local law enforcement agency to investigate. You may save the life of a friend, loved one or yourself.

YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE: YOUR PPE.

Your PPE is as important as a weapon is to an infantry soldier. From the flight line to the frontline, there is always a piece of equipment you need to maintain for your safety, in fact there may be many.

Safety glasses, gloves, boots, hard hats or other equipment need to

be maintained, cleaned and replaced as they become unserviceable.

One problem that may create a hurdle is budgets. If you need new PPE, by all means, replace it. But don't discard a piece of equipment that has life left in it.

Take care of all

PPE, use it appropriately, maintain it, store it safely and inspect it frequently to ensure serviceability.

Keep yourself safe and injury free. Take five steps, minutes, seconds to save a life. Use your PPE each time, every time.

