

# FATALITY



AFZF-GA

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD**  
**FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056**



27 June 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Use of Illegal Drugs – Fatality Memo

1. Illegal drugs apparently killed a young III Corps soldier this past weekend. After spending Saturday evening partying with friends at an off-post club, then driving around town for several hours, the soldier decided to sleep at a fellow unit member's apartment. His fellow unit members there mistook the soldier's initial condition as a hangover and weren't alarmed. They eventually noticed he was unconscious rather than sleeping, called 911, and began resuscitation efforts. Paramedics rushed him to the emergency room at Darnall Hospital, where he later died of severe brain damage. Preliminary medical reports indicate the soldier's condition was likely brought on by the use of an illegal drug--cocaine.

2. It is a sad tragedy when we lose a soldier to something as heinous as illegal drugs. The reasons a soldier feels it necessary to turn to drugs is difficult to calculate, but what we do know is that it almost always causes pain and suffering, and sometimes death. Some soldiers think that they can't get hooked if they use a drug just once. Educational follow-up should alert soldiers to the dangers of "one-time use." Regrettably, death is often the result of "one time use." To add to the tragedy, this soldier died while his fellow unit members were present. They either did not recognize symptoms of his drug use, or they condoned it. Perhaps they were using it themselves. I hope not. My sense is that someone knew this soldier was using drugs. This person should have raised the alarm. Somebody -- his buddies -- let this soldier down.

3. First line leaders must know their soldiers. They must know what their soldiers are doing, when they are doing it, and perhaps most importantly, with whom they are doing it. Leaders must know the telltale signs of drug abuse and problems that go with it. Leaders are the lifeline—and there are tools and programs available to assist them. The Army Substance Abuse Program (A.S.A.P.) is located in Building 2242 at Fort Hood (287-8417 or 287-2892). Every installation has similar programs. Become familiar with referral requirements and how to line-up your soldiers with the help available. I am certain there are leaders providing constant and accurate drug abuse messages to our soldiers, just as they do with our safety programs. I am certain that the vast majority of our company and battalion commanders aggressively pursue our required urinalysis programs. I am also just as certain we have soldiers with existing drug and alcohol problems who feel separated from preventive type programs. These soldiers don't always seek help on their own. Only caring leaders--sergeants and lieutenants who know their soldiers--can identify and attack this problem. Find these soldiers and direct them to the help they need.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'B. B. Bell'.

B. B. BELL  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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