

FATALITY



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
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AFZF-GA-SAFE

20 JAN 03

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: POV Fatality Due to Fatigue -- Fatality Memo 03-07

1. We learned again today that fatal POV accidents don't take holidays! Less than two weeks after our 6th POV fatality for the fiscal year occurred, III Corps experienced another POV fatality. This latest fatal accident took the life of a senior NCO who fell asleep at the wheel while driving during the early morning hours. He collided head-on with a semi truck, just a few hours before daylight. Initial information revealed that the NCO might have entered the wrong lane before colliding with the semi truck. He sustained multiple injuries in the collision. The soldier was transported to a near-by hospital for emergency surgery, but unfortunately he died about an hour and a half after the time of the accident. Alcohol was not a factor in this fatality.

2. With the loss of this NCO comes the pain and grief of family, friends and fellow soldiers. While the emotional loss of this NCO is paramount, the other sad fact is that the unit lost the benefit of an experienced leader. The unquestionable experience level of senior leaders is a valuable asset to the unit, especially to the junior soldiers. That is another unfortunate part of losing a senior leader in what appeared to have been a preventable accident.

3. Commanders must ensure their safety programs and efforts, especially for off-duty activities, continue to be aggressively employed in light of potential deployments. Several other recent serious incidents bring attention to the fact that commanders and leaders should step up their accident/suicide prevention efforts in the period immediately preceding pending deployments. Some soldiers may feel that "time is running short," and have the desire to visit family and friends before "shipping out." Soldiers may embark on ad hoc trips that are not well planned. This is where caring leaders keep an eye and ear on their soldiers' travel plans and offer safe solutions where warranted, with special emphasis on avoiding driver fatigue. The same watchfulness applies to soldiers who may exhibit emotional problems or suicidal ideations.

4. We cannot afford to lose sight of our safety programs. Both your leaders and soldiers must pull together in these challenging times and watch out for each other's safety and welfare. This is where the "buddy system" can really pay off and ensure that our combat power is preserved.

ENSURE WIDEST DISSEMINATION AND POST ON BULLETIN BOARDS

ROBERT WILSON
Major General, USA
Commanding

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