FATALITY

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

AFZF-GA-SAFE

23 September 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: M1 Training – Fatality Memo 01-02

1. A III Corps soldier was killed yesterday in a training incident involving an M1 tank. Since the accident is still under investigation, the contributing factors have not yet been identified. However, we can always take general lessons learned from accidents by disseminating safety pointers.

2. The soldier apparently was killed when he received a fatal injury as a result of being crushed between the main gun breech and ceiling of the turret. Combat soldiering inherently contains potential hazards. Situational awareness, strict attention to details, crew coordination/communication, and adherence to standards are extremely important when operating combat systems. There is no room for error when operating in enclosed, confined areas, especially when some systems are unforgiving where safety zones are measured in inches.

3. One of the cardinal rules of M1 crew safety is clear, correct communication. Before an M1 turret or the turret of any other turreted combat vehicle is traversed, crew members must announce "POWER" to communicate the potential hazard. Additionally, crew members must ensure that their bodies and extremities are in the proper places, out of harm's way. All six screens on the M1 tank must be in place in order to provide additional safety to crew members.

4. In order to avoid a similar occurrence, commanders will ensure that combat vehicle crew members are immediately briefed on applicable warnings outlined in manuals. Sergeant's Time or Safety Standdowns afford excellent opportunities to reinforce safety measures. Enforcing and following safety procedures is the standard.

This memo will be posted on unit bulletin boards.

B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding

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