



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
330 OLD NISKAYUNA ROAD
LATHAM, NY 12110-3514

30 APR 2025

MNAR-CG

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Training Year (TY) 25 Annual Training Safety Message

1. Reference:

- a. AR 385-10, The Army Safety Program, 24 July 2023
- b. AR 600-55, The Army Driver and Operator Standardization program, 17 September 2019
- c. DA PAM 385-63, Range Safety, 16 April 2014
- d. NG Supplement Number 1 to AR 385-10, The Army Safety Program, 12 February 2015
- e. ATP 5-19, Risk Management, 9 November 2021
- f. FM 6-0, Commander and Staff Organization and Operations, 16 May 2022
- g. HQDA EXORD 020-19, Identification and Compliance of all battalion and battalion-equivalent organizations enrollment into the Army Readiness Assessment Program, 15 November 2018
- h. Camp Smith Training Site Range Standard Operating Procedures, 27 January 2022

2. As the TY25 Annual Training (AT) season gets underway, Commanders and Leaders – make sure you understand my intent and guidance – **no training event, movement, weapons qualification, convoy, flight activity, or anything else is worth the life or causing severe injury to one of our Soldiers or a member of the public! Safety is an absolute must. Executing a training event at the expense of safety is not the right decision. The loss of time is not worth the loss of a Soldier's life! Be smart and never override safety. Make sure every Soldier understands safety is absolutely Job #1.**

2. In Fiscal Year 2024, the New York Army National Guard experienced **98** Army reportable mishaps. The most severe, caused significant harm to two of our Soldiers. **Both mishaps were preventable!**

a. **Class B mishap, Permanent partial disability (loss of eye).** A Soldier was shot in the eye with a UTM round during STX lanes training at Ft. Drum. This resulted in the Soldier losing his eye. The Soldier is now in the Soldier Recovery Unit and can no longer serve

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with his team. The appointed Safety Investigation Board determined the Soldier failed to wear the required protective eye wear; the standard issued Sun, Wind and Dust Goggles from TASC in accordance with Ft. Drum policy and procedures. The leadership also failed to effectively enforce and communicate the use of proper eye protection through pre combat checks and oversight. **See enclosed safety vignette.**

b. **Class C mishap, lost workdays (TBD).** During direct fire live fire operations at Ft. Drum, a Soldier was struck in the head by the recoiling breach mechanism of a M777A2 Howitzer. The impact rendered the Soldier unconscious with multiple face and head injuries. The Soldier is currently undergoing additional medical treatment and is not currently able to return to duty. The unit conducted a safety investigation and determined that the Soldier was adequately trained, executed procedures correctly, and was wearing all the required PPE. It was noted that the Advanced Combat Helmet significantly mitigated the severity of the impact. The investigation also determined the section chief failed to visually verify the recoil area clearance before giving the command to fire. Other contributing factors included inadequate preparation by the unit commander, specifically the omission of required dry-fire training preceding the direct-fire live fire. **See enclosed safety vignette.**

3. SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MISHAP PREVENTION.

a. **Individual Soldier Responsibilities.** Soldiers must understand and comply with all safety requirements related to their duties, as outlined in current regulations and job performance standards. Soldiers are required to use all necessary PPE as required by Field Manuals/Technical Manuals and regulations. Any safety violations must be immediately reported to their leadership for correction. Soldiers must be aware of their surroundings and report any potential safety hazards or unsafe conditions they observe. **If something doesn't seem right, then Soldiers should ask the question, what is right?** Soldiers must adhere to all established standard operating procedures (SOPs) and leaders must enforce them.

b. **Leader Responsibilities.** Leaders must demonstrate a commitment to safety through their own actions and words, creating an environment where safety is a top priority. **Lead by example!** Leaders are responsible for providing Soldiers with appropriate safety training and relevant safety procedures. They must actively identify and correct unsafe conditions or behaviors. **Be present to provide directions and oversight!** Leaders must enforce safety regulations and standards, taking disciplinary action when necessary. Leaders must encourage Soldiers to report safety hazards and unsafe conditions.

c. **Manage Risks.** Risk management (RM) is the Army's process for helping organizations and individuals make informed decisions to reduce or offset risk. Using the RM process increases operational effectiveness and the probability of mission accomplishment. It is a systematic way of identifying hazards, assessing them, and managing the associated risks. Commanders, staff officers, leaders, Soldiers, and Army Civilians integrate risk management into planning, preparation, execution, and assessment of operations. Include hazards in Safety briefings. **RM saves lives!**

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d. **Rehearsals.** Rehearsals are required! A rehearsal is a session in which the commander and staff or unit practices expected actions to improve performance during execution. Rehearsals allow leaders and their Soldiers to practice key aspects of the concept of operations. These actions help Soldiers orient themselves to their environment and the planned actions of other units before executing an operation. Rehearsals help Soldiers build a lasting mental picture and allow leaders to assess preparations and identify areas that require more supervision.

e. **Convoy operations.** Convoy operations occur frequently during annual training. They require detailed planning and situational understanding of the environment. Specifically for convoy safety, I want to stress:

- (1) Convoy commanders **MUST** conduct convoy safety briefs prior to movement.
- (2) Drivers and assistant drivers **MUST** be licensed on the vehicle they are operating.
- (3) Drivers and assistant drivers **MUST** have 8 hours of sleep prior to the convoy.
- (4) Assistance drivers **WILL NOT** sleep during convoy operations.
- (5) Drivers and assistant drivers **WILL NOT** drive for more than 10 hours (including rest and meal breaks).
- (6) The maximum convoy speed on highways is **50 MPH**. **DO NOT EXCEED 50 MPH** on highways. For other roads, the speed limit is as posted (if it does not exceed 50 MPH).
- (7) **DO NOT** transport Soldiers in the back of trucks over highways – they can only transport Soldiers in training areas such as Ft. Drum or Camp Smith Training Site.
- (8) **USE** commercial or GSA vehicles to transport Soldiers over non-tactical roads.

f. **Range safety.** Soldiers, regardless of their experience, must undergo re-familiarization training and Primary Marksmanship Instruction prior to training on a live-fire range. Range Safety Officers and Leaders must vigilantly enforce muzzle-awareness and range clearing procedures to prevent negligent discharges. **Leaders must enforce the use of personal protective equipment. Follow the Camp Smith Training Site Range SOP.**

g. **After Action Reviews (AARs).** Use AARs as a process to learn from past training, exercises, or missions to identify what went well, what can be improved, and how to be better prepared for future operations. Capture AAR comments on risk assessments under block 14 and review these when planning future missions.

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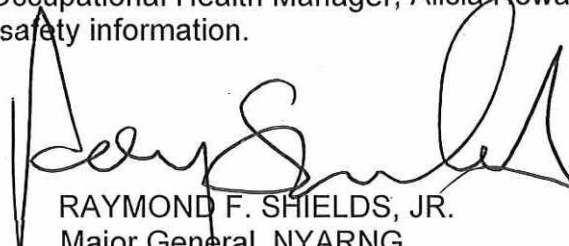
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h. **Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP)**. The ARAP survey is **mandatory!** It is one of the best tools battalion-level commanders can use to reduce mishaps. The survey is designed to help commanders understand and evaluate their unit's safety climate and culture. Army Regulation 385-10 and HQDA EXORD 020-19 mandates Army National Guard battalion-level commanders assess their unit's readiness through ARAP within 120 days of assuming command. Enroll here, <https://earap.safety.army.mil/>. A follow up shorter assessment is due within 12-18 months (mid-tour) to give commanders an opportunity to see how their leadership influences safety climate from one season to the next, <https://irav.safety.army.mil/>.

i. **To reiterate, no training event is worth the life of one of our Soldiers. No training event is worth serious injury to one of our Soldiers. No convoy movement is worth the life of a civilian on our roadways. No convoy movement is worth the serious injury of a civilian on our roadways. Don't rush. Be thoughtful and careful. I would rather have a unit be late for a training event, than to be on time at the expense of being safe. Make sure every Soldier remembers that safety is everyone's responsibility and is our highest priority.**

4. Please contact the NYARNG Safety & Occupational Health Manager, Alicia Howard, alicia.l.howard.civ@army.mil for additional safety information.

Encl
Safety Vignettes



RAYMOND F. SHIELDS, JR.
Major General, NYARNG
Commanding General

DISTRIBUTION:

AA
BB
BR
F1-F5
F7

Safety Vignette – Failure to wear Protective Eyewear

WHAT: Soldier injured

UNIT: 427 BSB

DUTY STATUS: MDAY (Annual Training)

WHERE: Ft. Drum, NY

WHEN: 25JUN2024

Summary of Mishap Soldier was **shot in the eye** with a UTM round during STX lanes training at Ft. Drum.

Disposition:
Soldier lost his eye from a UTM round.
Soldier Recovery Unit.



Expended
UTM Round
Casing

Correct protective eyewear



Correct protective mask

Findings:

1. Failed to wear required personal protective eyewear LAW Ft. Drum policy.
2. PCCs/PCIs not conducted
3. Lack of leadership oversight and enforcement

Prescription glasses are not protective eyewear!



Total Cost of mishap - \$396,000

<https://www.peosoldier.army.mil/Equipment/Approved-Eyewear-QPL/>

Safety Vignette – Failure to follow procedures

WHAT: Soldier injured

UNIT: 1-258 FA

DUTY STATUS: MDAY (Annual Training)

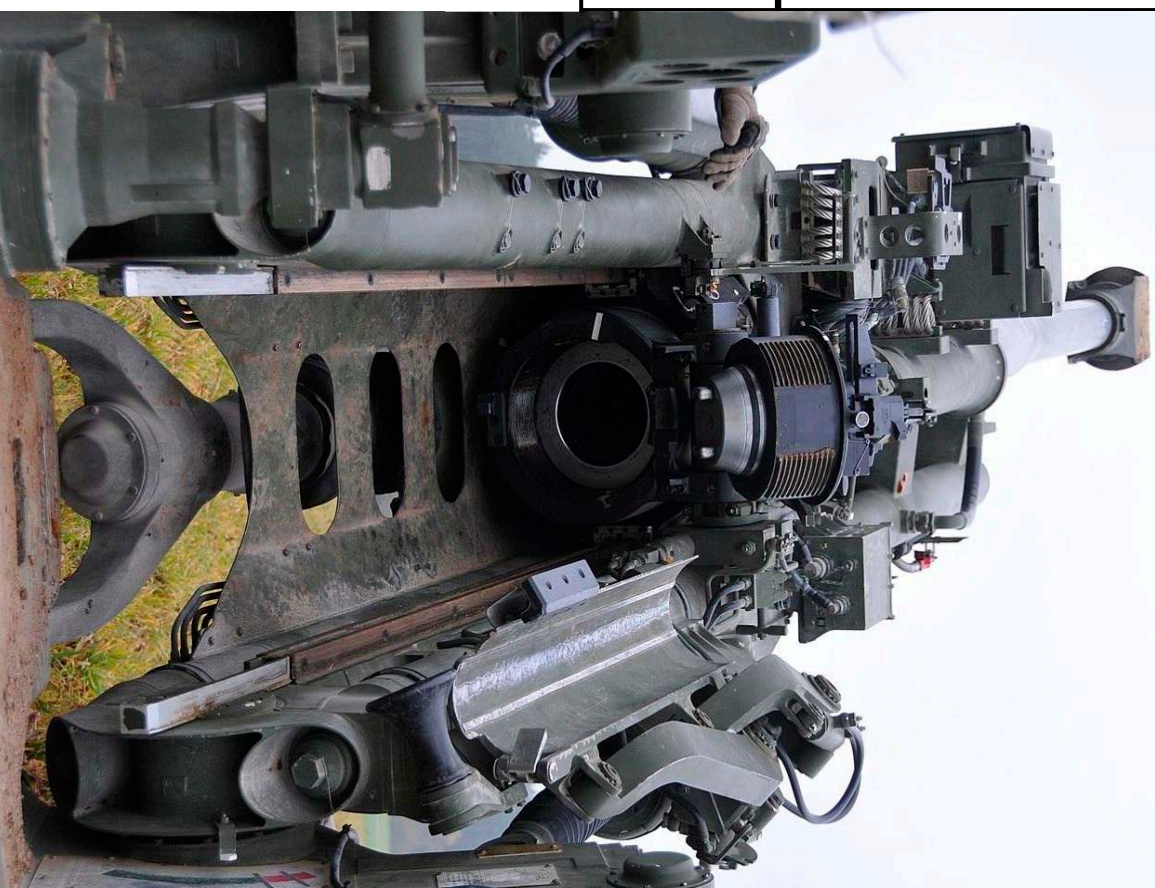
WHERE: Ft. Drum, NY

WHEN: 10AUG2024

Summary of Mishap Soldier struck in the head by recoiling breech mechanism of M777A2 howitzer during direct fire – live fire at Ft. Drum.

Disposition: Soldier knocked unconscious. Multiple head and face injuries. Hearing loss. Soldier receiving additional medical treatment.

Advanced Combat Helmet (ACH) significantly mitigated the severity of the impact.



Findings:

1. Section Chief failed to visually verify the recoil area was clear before giving the command to fire – procedure or checklist not followed correctly.
2. Unit did not conduct a “dry-fire” iteration of the direct-fire mission prior to live-fire – Supervisor/Leader failed to provide effective training.
3. Soldier was adequately trained, executed procedures correctly, and was wearing all the required personal protective equipment.

Total Cost of mishap - TBD