FATALITY

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER & FORT POLK
6661 WARRIOR TRAIL, BUILDING 350
FORT POLK, LOUISIANA 71459-5339

AFZX-SA

FEB 2 2 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: POV Fatality Safety Alert 05-01

1. A JRTC and Fort Polk Soldier was recently killed in an accident while driving his POV, returning to Fort Polk after a weekend pass. The accident occurred at 0145. The Soldier was returning from New Orleans to Fort Polk. While driving back on Interstate 10, he crossed over the median, struck a tractor trailer head-on, and was instantly killed. A Safe Soldier contract was signed prior to his departure.

2. This soldier made a bad choice, starting a four-hour trip on or about midnight when he was most likely to fall asleep behind the wheel.

3. This accident could have been prevented. Most POV fatalities occur between 2300 and 0600 because of the onset of fatigue. The majority of accidents occur within the last 120 miles of a return trip or the last three hours prior to arriving home. Soldiers try to push their endurance and make the last leg of their trip, even though they are too tired to drive safely. Soldiers should avoid traveling at this time and, if needed, should request an extension from their chain of command.

4. **Lessons Learned**:

a. Always prepare a safe driving plan, to include the return trip, and avoid traveling during the most dangerous hours when you are most likely to fall asleep behind the wheel.

b. Fully understand the risks associated with extended driving, especially fatigue and adverse weather conditions. Incorporate frequent rest stops and avoid driving during peak accident times.

c. If you need to stop and rest, you should immediately contact the chain of command. Leaders must know their Soldiers' travel plans and counsel them accordingly.

THIS ACCIDENT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU. YOU CAN PREVENT IT BY PLANNING OUT ALL OF YOUR DRIVING TRIPS-- EVEN THE SHORT ONES.

MICHAEL D. BARBERO
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:
A+

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