



Driver's Training: An In-House Solution

By First Lieutenant David P. Burris and Sergeant Lovetta M. Ritchie

When soldiers are injured or killed in an accident, it is sometimes because they lack the training to safely drive the vehicles they are required to operate and maintain. Well-trained drivers can handle emergency situations caused by track loss or a lack of steering response or braking power without panic, whereas untrained operators typically have accidents in these same situations. Drivers should not operate vehicles for even short distances without the correct training and licensing.

Personnel at the 5th Engineer Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood identified driver's training as a weakness across the battalion. To correct this deficiency, they developed a battalion-level program to train new drivers and re-educate current drivers. In addition to considering the requirements specific to Fort Leonard Wood, they evaluated the way driver's training had been conducted in other units to which they had been assigned. They also reviewed the following pertinent regulations:

- AR 600-55, *The Army Driver and Operator Standardization Program*
- AR 385-55, *Prevention of Motor Vehicle Accidents*
- FM 21-306, *Manual for the Track Combat Vehicle Driver*
- FM 21-17, *Driver Selection, Training, and Supervision: Track Combat Vehicles*

When developing the program, battalion personnel ensured that all facets of training were covered. They included driver maintenance responsibilities, driving in all types of weather and over all types of terrain, and emergency procedures peculiar to each type of vehicle. With the battalion's wide range of vehicle types (everything from M113A3s to HMMWVs to M916s to AVLBs), this was one of the most challenging blocks of instruction to develop.

Battalion personnel developed a 40-hour program that covered all aspects of vehicle operations, including mandatory accident avoidance training and a block of instruction covering night driving and the use of night vision devices. Instructors include the battalion's motor sergeant, maintenance technician, and Master Drivers. The schedule for the week-long class is shown in the figure. At the conclusion of the training, students are familiar with the HMMWV and are prepared to begin driver's training on larger and more complex pieces of equipment. Final licensing remains the responsibility of Master Drivers within each company.

Many of the training aids used in the class were available through the installation's Training Support Center. These included videos on preventing driving while intoxicated; using seatbelts; and operating vehicles such as the HMMWV, 2.5-ton truck, and HEMMT. The lessons were compiled into a driver's training booklet that has space for students to take notes.

Since implementing the program in October 1998, the battalion has trained more than 50 new drivers. Feedback from the course has been very positive, and after each class an after-action review is performed to further refine the training. The class is scheduled each quarter, and the schedule is published as part of the battalion's

quarterly training guidance. This gives units time to plan and ensure that soldiers who need driver's training can attend the course.

Driver's Training Schedule	
Day 1	
0800-0830	Course Introduction
0830-0930	TMs, LOs, Using DA Form 5988-E/2404, Equipment Inspection Maintenance Worksheet
0930-1030	Practical Exercise: Dispatch Procedures (DA Form 5988-E)
1030-1130	Safety Rules and Procedures
1130-1300	Lunch
1300-1400	Effects of Physical Laws/Loading Trucks
1400-1430	Accident Prevention
1430-1500	Accident Report Procedures (DD Form 518, SF 91)
1500-1600	Practical Exercise: Report an Accident
1600-1630	View Video TF (VT) 20-6374 "Consequences"
DAY 2	
0830-0930	Driving Under Adverse Road Conditions
0930-1030	View Video on Winter Driving Tactics
1030-1130	Practical Exercise
1130-1300	Lunch
1300-1400	Night Vision Goggle Introduction
1400-1500	Night Vision Driving
1500-1600	View Video "Night Vision Goggles"
1600-1630	Review
DAY 3	
0830-0930	View Video "Introduction to HMMWV Operations"
0930-1130	HMMWV Familiarization
1130-1300	Lunch
1300-1630	PMCS Instruction
DAY 4	
0830-0930	Review HMMWV Familiarization
0930-1130	Practical Exercise
1130-1300	Lunch
1300-1630	Review Practical Exercise
DAY 5	
0830-1130	Hands-On Test
1130-1300	Lunch
1300-1400	Comprehensive Test
1400-1430	Test Review and Course Critique
1430-1600	DA Form 348 Issues

For more information, call the battalion maintenance officer at (573) 596-0141 or DSN 581-0141.



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