

WHY ALL SOLDIERS DESERVE THE PROPER EQUIPMENT/TRAINING !

On 10 JAN 05, the M1114 I was driving was struck by an IED while patrolling in Samarra. The IED consisted of a command detonated 155mm artillery round laid beside the road.

The round was detonated between my up armored HMMWV and a Nissan pickup truck carrying Iraqi army soldiers. Both vehicles were within ten meters either side of the blast origin. Two of the IA were killed and one wounded. A fragment weighing approximately two pounds struck the windshield directly in front of my face. The frag penetrated nearly all the way through actually splitting the Lexan last layer and spraying glass fragments all the way to the wall behind the rear seat. The impact knocked my hands off of the steering wheel and stuck glass frags in my face.

The gunner was riding low between his side shields and had his helmet gouged. Because of the up armored HMMWV, I am able to write this note today.

Because of eye protection, I am able to see the keyboard to write this note.

Because of proper training, I was able to function after the blast and exit the kill zone positioning the vehicle to cover the recovery operations.



The other soldiers in the vehicle and behind us were able to render first aid return small arms fire and evacuate the casualties and damaged equipment. It is our responsibility as officers and senior NCOs to ensure we have done

everything in our power to properly train, equip and lead our subordinates. No detail is too minor. No training unimportant. That day, another major used combat life saver skills to keep a wounded soldier alive. A staff sergeant coordinated a QRF over the radio. A captain operated the 50cal machine gun. You never know what exact job you will actually have to perform when the time comes. Stress this to all your soldiers. Be prepared to do everything you have been trained to do competently, Immediately and without hesitation. Your own or someone else life may depend on it.



Your soldiers must be mentally prepared to overcome fear and anxiety, to face adversity day after day. Two days earlier, I was in the same M1114 when two 155mm rounds were detonated less than three feet from the passenger side door I was sitting on the other side of. The enemy had not been properly trained and did not properly em-place the rounds. The blast went straight up. Proper training and preparation allowed us to react to the ambush, exit the kill zone, and effectively return fire against the enemy. Your soldiers must be mentally prepared to face adversity day after day and to overcome fear and anxiety.
TRAIN AS YOU FIGHT, FIGHT AS YOU TRAIN!
If you are not doing it start today, right now.

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