



TRACKS

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May 27, 2021

'Quality drives the process' in Final Drive Branch

by Whitney Hall

ANAD Public Affairs Office

Employees overhaul and repair final drives for a variety of vehicles in the Army's fleet, from the M1 Abrams to the M88 and M113, in the Directorate of Production's Transmission Drive Gear Division, Final Drive Branch at Anniston Army Depot.

The final drive is a heavy duty, speed reducing gear that connects the transmission output through the hull of the tank to the drive sprocket. Its primary functions are to increase torque and reduce the speed of transmission outputs. And because of the high importance of the component, employees in the area are focused on quality.

In fact, throughout the overhaul process, there are continuous quality checks. "Quality drives the process," said Spence Beasley, heavy mobile equipment supervisor in the Final Drive Branch. "At every point in the process we're looking at parts to see if they're good, bad or need to be replaced. We don't want anyone in the field needing to take the tracks off and make repairs."

Tristan Homesley, heavy mobile equipment mechanic and subject matter expert in the area, emphasized just how much the work he and his coworkers do daily matters to the warfighter.

"This process is very important," Homesley said. "The final drive is one of the main components that makes a tank move. If it's not working properly, Soldiers will be stranded in the field."

The overhaul process begins when the final drives arrive in the shop's loading area. They are then placed on stands where mechanics inspect each one to determine if they can be overhauled or must be scrapped. Those that will be overhauled are then sand-blasted and washed.

Once the final drives return to the Final Drive Branch, mechanics begin disassembly. They also inspect parts at this stage for quality.

Next, parts are routed to be washed before they are inspected according to the overhaul inspection procedure in the machine



U.S. Army Photo by Mark Cleghorn

Tristan Homesley, a heavy mobile equipment mechanic, inspects an overhauled final drive for an M1 Abrams combat vehicle.

shop. Those parts are then staged where the mechanic will begin pulling their parts for assembly.

Finally, mechanics begin the assembly process, repairing parts that can be fixed or adding new parts when needed. Once the final drives have been reassembled, a mechanic tests them to ensure proper function.

"First, I visually inspect the final drive and then I load it into a machine for more testing," Homesley explained. "In the machine, I complete a spin test to check for oil leaks."

The entire process is completed almost exclusively in the Final Drive Branch, including painting of the final drive, final quality testing and shipping. As a result, mechanics in the shop learn a variety of processes.

In fact, Beasley stresses the importance of cross training, moving employees to different lines and areas often.

"All of our mechanics have a really good skill set coming in, but a lot of these processes are learned through on-the-job training,"

he said. "We really believe in cross-training. I move employees around so they learn both disassembly and assembly. It helps them understand the entire process."

Homesley echoes the importance of cross training, noting that it is good for everyone.

"It really helps for everyone to have experience working the entire process," he said. "This keeps those working in disassembly from unintentionally doing things that cause issues when it's time for other mechanics to reassemble."

The Final Drive Branch completes nearly 100 final drives monthly, on average. In May, they overhauled 54 final drives for the M1 Abrams, 49 for the M113 and five for the M88.

"I'm really proud of the work we do each month, especially with the volume we produce," Beasley said.

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Memorial Day Message

Col. Marvin Walker, depot commander, gives a Memorial Day message and safety tips.

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AMC Public Affairs, Protocol offices visit ANAD

Team members from the Army Materiel Command visit ANAD's workforce.

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Pathways grad headed to the U.S. Air Force

Camran Hudgins, a recent Pathways program graduate prepares for his career in the military.

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Enjoy Memorial Day, stay safe this weekend

by Col. Marvin Walker

ANAD Commander



We continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic even as mask guidelines and regulations ease. I urge you to take precautions and to follow the guidance of the Department of Defense and Centers for Disease Control on mask wearing for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals as well as social distancing.

I also encourage you to get the vaccination if you are able. Consult with your healthcare provider and make the best choice. The vaccinations are safe. It is the most effective way for us to slow the spread of the virus.

This weekend also brings with it other risk factors. In fact, it is often cited as being one of the most dangerous weekends as it relates to injuries and accidents. Contributing factors include water activities, hot weather exposure and increased alcohol consumption.

As always, water safety is key. If you plan to be in or around water, whether swimming or on a boat, know your limitations and follow the rules. Also drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.

If you're hitting the road, get plenty of rest beforehand. Also remember to check your signals, brake lights and headlights. And never drink and drive. Obey the speed limits and do not text while driving.

Whatever the plans, take some time to relax, remember to use good judgement and stay safe.

After the holiday weekend, it will take all of us to continue our mission of supporting the warfighter.



Col. Marvin Walker

Team Anniston -- As we prepare for Memorial Day, it is important that we take time to reflect on the meaning and significance of the day.

For many, the Memorial Day holiday signals an unofficial start to summer and its activities. More importantly, it is a day of national awareness and solemn reverence; a day for us to honor the military men and women who gave their lives in defense of our nation, its values, our freedoms and our liberties.

The observance began as Decoration Day in 1868; initially established as a day to honor the lives lost during the Civil War.

Eventually, the commemoration expanded to honor every American who died while in military service, thus changing the name to Memorial Day.

Today, many choose to honor their friends and loved ones

who made the ultimate sacrifice by visiting cemeteries and holding memorials. In fact, throughout the country and state, many are preparing to recognize these brave men and women in a variety of ways. I hope you will take some time this weekend to do the same.

Yet, after the last year, choosing how to safely celebrate with family and friends tops the list for most. As we near the weekend, many are preparing to hold their first celebrations in over a year; from cookouts to travel. However you choose to celebrate the day, I urge you to do so safely.

PATHWAYS HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Thirty-eight student trainee interns graduate program

by Staff Reports

ANAD Public Affairs Office

Thirty-eight students recently completed Anniston Army Depot's Pathways High School cooperative education program. The student trainee interns were recognized during ceremonies May 13. Due to social distancing, a morning and afternoon ceremony were held.

"You are the true definition of success," said Marilyn Futrell, program specialist for the Pathways Program, "You've faced many challenges due to COVID-19, but you overcame them and we are so proud of you."

The group, which is the sixth under the Pathways Internship Program, had a much different year from previous classes due to COVID-19; completing some of their training virtually before returning to on-site training.

Yet, the class continued to boast outstanding achievements in the program and at their respective high schools. This year's class represents 20 high schools across five counties.

Each student was assigned to one of four trades including welding, mechanics, electronics and machining. Additionally, some students were able to gain certifications in electronics or welding.

Of the high school interns, 30 will convert to ANAD's Technical College program this summer. Students in this program will begin a certificate or degree program at Gadsden State Community College based upon their assigned trade. Seven students will continue their education at a four-year university and one student will join the military.

During the ceremony, Col. Marvin Walker, the depot's commander, and Sgt. Maj. Happiness Brown gave encouraging remarks to the students.

"The sky is the limit, so be the best at whatever you do," Brown said.

Walker encouraged students to always progress and not to give up. "Always keep moving and don't get complacent," he said. "This program has given you a great start and it'll pay off, if you keep going."

TRACKS

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Accountability: It all starts with you, me

by Tim Mitchell

ANAD Legal Office

As employees of Anniston Army Depot, our goal should always be to give our best effort toward the success of our mission to support the warfighter. A key component in meeting this goal is to ensure that employee misconduct does not interfere with that goal. You have a role to play.

The purpose of this article is to address some areas where each of us can make a concerted effort to meet and exceed mission expectations. The Legal Office has seen several areas where some employees need to improve and others where coworkers can hold their fellow employees accountable.

Some of the most common disciplinary offenses we see relate to attendance. This includes repeated tardiness, failure to call in to request absence from work, failure to report for overtime and failure to provide documentation to justify absence when required by a supervisor. An employee cannot get the work done if he or she is not here. It is important that you do your part by coming to work and letting your supervisor know as soon as possible when you need to be out. Doing so helps the mission.

A related but more serious problem is fraud – being away from work without taking leave. Employees have been removed from service for this offense. Not only is the work not getting done, it defrauds the taxpayer. Coworkers can report suspected abuse to their supervisor, the Directorate of Emergency Services, or the Legal Office.

To be successful, employees must treat each other and their supervisors with dignity

and respect. We have seen many disciplinary actions for discourtesy, failure to follow instructions and conduct unbecoming a Federal employee. The common factor in each case is that an employee or supervisor either failed to control his or her temper or failed to show respect for another employee.

Disagreements are human nature and not every disagreement or unkind word is worthy of discipline, but if each of us would be more considerate and forgiving, disruptions in the workplace can be minimized. Where this doesn't happen, issues should be reported to your chain of supervision.

Safety is another area where we all can help. We have seen far too many cases where employees fail to properly wear personal protective equipment or have failed to follow safe work practices. Employees should let coworkers know when they see someone doing an unsafe act, and repeated violations should be reported to the appropriate supervisor.

Finally, all employees are expected to be honest. Dishonest conduct, lying on official forms, lying to a supervisor or investigator or putting false information in a resume, may result in suspension or, more likely, removal from Federal service. These actions could have been avoided by simply being truthful; something we all learned in kindergarten. Accountability begins with each one of us. By following the rules of the workplace, which includes respecting each other, working safely, telling the truth and holding each other accountable, each of us makes this a better place to work and ensures the depot's future. Do your part. I know I will.

AMC Public Affairs, Protocol offices visit

by Whitney Hall

ANAD Public Affairs Office

Team members from the Army Materiel Command Public Affairs and Protocol offices visited Anniston Army depot last week.

The visit gave the team an opportunity to experience, firsthand, the mission of ANAD.

"We often hear and talk about the great work being done in our organic industrial base and Anniston is a huge part of that," said Christine Mitchell, a public affairs specialist at AMC. "As public affairs specialists, it's so great to see our workforce and actually experience what they are doing to equip the warfighter."

During the tour, the group visited the Combat Vehicle Repair Facility, where they saw employees overhauling and repairing combat vehicles. They also toured the Turbine Engine Facility.

Team members from ANAD's Public Affairs Office led the group on a tour of The Morning Show set and the AMC team wrapped up their visit with a tour of the Pathways Program and the Museum Support Center.

"It was really remarkable to see just how many people are involved in the mission here, and to hear how their knowledge and skillset comes together to make it all happen," Mitchell said.



U.S. Army Photos by Mark Cleghorn

Adam Harvey, division chief of the Turbine Drive Train Division, shows Christine Mitchell, a public affairs specialist from the Army Materiel Command, parts of a turbine engine during a May 19 visit.



ABOVE: Marilyn Futrell, program specialist in the Pathways Program, speaks to members of the Army Materiel Command's Public Affairs and Protocol offices during a tour May 19.



LEFT: Team members from the Army Materiel Command's Public Affairs and Protocol offices watch as an employee from the Museum Support Center displays weapons from the Civil War, World II and other time periods.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS OF THE FINAL DRIVE BRANCH



Nathaniel Williams, a heavy mobile equipment mechanic, disassembles a final drive for the M1 Abrams in the Final Drive Branch at Anniston Army Depot.



U.S. Army Photos by Mark Cleghorn

A row of final drives for the M1 Abrams hang on a paint conveyor where they await a final coat of paint.



Charlie Fowler, a team leader in the Final Drive Branch prepares to transport a bin of overhauled M1 Abrams final drives.

Pathways high school grad prepares for military career

by Whitney Hall

ANAD Public Affairs Office

Camran Hudgins recently graduated from the Pathways High School Program at Anniston Army Depot, and soon he will begin his career with the United States Air Force.

Hudgins, who graduates from Saks High School this week, joined Pathways in August. As a student intern, he worked as a mechanic.

“The depot and the Pathways program prepared me in more ways than one,” said Hudgins. “This program taught me valuable skills and taught me lessons on how to work well, be on time and be prepared.”

The military was always a possibility for Hudgins whose father served in the United States Army. He credits his father’s guidance with helping him ultimately decide to join the military.

“My dad had a lot of insight and gave me a lot of advice,” Hudgins said. “He really had a lot of knowledge which helped me during my research.”

Hudgins says he decided to join the Air Force to serve his country and boasted of the educational and career opportunities. In addition to his skills in mechanics, he loves computers and is considering a career in cyber security.



U.S. Army Photo by Mark Cleghorn

Camran Hudgins, a student trainee intern, trains in the mechanics area of the Pathways Program facility.

Marilyn Futurell, program specialist for the Pathways Program says Hudgins is a great student and she is confident he will achieve his career goals.

“Camran is always punctual and shows up ready to do all that is asked of him each day,” she said.

The Pathways Program was a great catalyst for Hudgins, which allowed him to explore career opportunities and gain new skills. He said ANAD let him know the wonderful opportunities that come from working for the United States government.

“As I prepare to graduate, I know all I learned in the Pathways program has helped me to be successful now and in the future,” said Hudgins.

Army National Hiring Days

Like Hudgins, students across the nation are preparing to graduate from high school and many are making the decision to join the military as well.

To encourage this, the Army is currently hosting the National Hiring Days campaign, which runs May 10 - June 14 in an effort to recruit 1,700 new Soldiers.

The Army is hiring both high school and college graduates. Those who choose to enlist have access to quality training, education and competitive benefits. Students also have the opportunity to join the Army ROTC, which is available at 1,000 college campuses nationwide.

Interested individuals can visit www.goarmy.com/hiring-days to determine if they meet qualifications and to learn more about job opportunities and hiring incentives.

OPM gives guidance on COVID-19 emergency paid leave

by Abby Quinn

ANAD DRM

On March 11, President Biden signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2). The Act included provisions authorizing emergency paid leave, or EPL, for covered Federal employees in specified qualifying circumstances through special funds.

An email was disseminated May 24 regarding this. Please read the following key notes and the attachments in that email before applying for this leave.

EPL is available 11 March 2021 – 30 September 2021. Total hours may not exceed 600 hours. It is granted on a conditional basis subject to the monies available in the EPL Fund as managed by the Office of Personnel Management. (i.e. if the fund runs out of money, employees will be required to change to another form of leave such as annual, sick, comp taken, LWOP).

EPL leave is subject to pay limitations totaling \$2800 biweekly for full time employees or a proportionally equivalent biweekly limit for part-time employees. Use of this leave may lead to overpayment and create a debt for the employee. The debt will be collected and a waiver will not be granted.

Any paid EPL leave will reduce the total service used to calculate any Federal civilian retirement benefit. (i.e. hours of leave will not be credited to your retirement).

For example, if an employee retires with 30 years of service and during 2021 received 348 hours of EPL, OPM must compute the years of service as 29 years and 10

months in the retirement annuity calculation. Based on the 2087-hour chart, 348 hours of EPL converts to 2 months. The two months of service time paid through EPL remain creditable for purposes of qualifying for retirement and for computation of the high-3 average salary. The employee remains eligible for an MRA+30 retirement even though the computation only includes 29 years and 10 months of service.

How do I apply?

1. Read the documents from the May 24 email and then complete the Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund form. The completed form, along with the required documentation, should be submitted to your first line supervisor, who will route it to your director or office chief for approval.
2. The form will then be sent to DRM Payroll who will complete the bottom of page 3, which ensures no overpayments occur. The completed form will be provided back to the employee’s supervisor. Complete an OPM 71 (Request for Leave or Approved Absence), marking the “Other Approved Leave” block for the hours shown on page 3 of the form.

What happens next?

1. DRM submits a request for reimbursement through the appropriate chain. If the request is approved, employees who were granted the

leave conditionally will have no action to take. If the request is denied, DRM Payroll will contact the supervisor and have the leave changed to another form of leave such as annual, sick, comp taken, or LWOP. The chain in which the reimbursement request will be submitted has not been established to date. DRM will maintain a log and begin submitting the reimbursement request as soon as the process is provided to ANAD.

2. For all EPL hours used and approved by OPM - on 1 October (or upon the employee’s retirement), DRM will submit an OF 5057 (Emergency Paid Leave Tracking Form) per employee to the appropriate source. DRM will work with CHRA and OPM to ensure the form is loaded into each employee’s Official Personnel Folder. EPL hours used will reduce the total service used in the annuity calculation.

For more information or if you have questions, go to your first line supervisor. If they cannot help you, contact one of the following personnel:

Mark Tuten	256-235-4814
Angela Thrasher	256-235-6032
Kristi Harper	256-240-3572
Abby Quinn	256-235-6150

It's never too early to plan for retirement

Retirement planning tips

from Staff Reports

ANAD CPAC Office

1. Confirm your retirement eligibility date.

You can do this by reviewing your Personal Statement of Benefits.

Your Personal Statement of Benefits can be located by accessing the Employee Benefits Information System, via the Army Benefits Center – Civilian website. The direct website address for EBIS is: <https://www.ebis.army.mil/>.

If you believe the reflected retirement eligibility date is not correct, please contact an ABC-C Benefits Specialist at 877-276-9287.

2. Obtain a retirement estimate.

It's recommended that you obtain a retirement estimate when you are one to five years from your planned retirement date.

Instructions for obtaining a retirement estimate can be found at: <https://www.abc.army.mil/HowDoI/RequestaRetirementEstimate.htm>.

3. Review your electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF).

This review will ensure your entire civilian federal work history is reflected accurately. Notify your servicing Civilian Personnel Advisory Center Human Resources Specialist if you find any discrepancies within your eOPF.

4. Confirm which periods of your federal service, if any, can be bought back.

Employees who served on temporary appointments in the federal government, had a break in federal service during their civilian careers or who have served in the military should contact ABC-C for assistance to determine whether it would be advantageous to buy the time back. This may impact your retirement eligibility date and/or the amount of your annuity.

5. Watch an on-line ABC-C retirement briefing.

Check the ABC-C website at, <https://www.abc.army.mil/retirements/> for updates on Pre-Retirement Benefits Overview DCS Briefing. Participants will become familiar with the requirements for retirement eligibility, consequences of not making a deposit/redeposit, survivor annuity elections, eligibility for continuing federal health and life insurance coverage and the process for submitting a retirement application. The briefing lasts approximately four hours. Be sure to get your supervisor's approval to watch.

6. The Thrift Savings Plan website offers great resources and tools.

The Retirement Income Calculator, which can assist you with achieving your retirement financial goals, and other tools and resources are located at: <https://www.tsp.gov/PlanningTools/index.html>.

7. Get familiar with the ABC-C website.

More information on retirement planning can be found on the ABC-C website at <https://www.abc.army.mil/retirements/PlanningForRetirement.htm>.

CPAC team can review retirement applications



The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center's Labor Management/Employee Relations Team is the point of contact for reviewing employees' completed CSRS and FERS retirement applications prior to the employee's submission to ABC-C.

This service is only provided when requested by the employee or when an employee submits an application for

CSRS/FERS disability retirement.

Requests for retirement application reviews should be submitted to your servicing Labor Management/Employee Relations Specialist directly or by calling the CPAC at 256-235-7860.

For general questions regarding federal employee benefits, call the CPAC at 256-235-7860.

How to buy back military time

A five-step process

from Staff Reports

ANAD CPAC Office

Are you a current civilian employee in a permanent or term position who previously served in a branch of the Armed Forces?

If so, you should consider obtaining a military buyback estimate to determine if it would be advantageous for you to buy those years of military service, so they can count towards your future civilian retirement under the Civil Service Retirement System or Federal Employees Retirement System.

Below are the five steps to obtain a military buyback estimate:

Step 1: Complete the RI 20-97, Estimated Earnings During Military Service form, and send it to the appropriate military finance center, with a copy of all DD Forms 214.

Go to the following Defense Finance and Accounting Services site to view a list of military finance centers: www.dfas.mil/civilianemployees/customer-service.html#Military.

Step 2: Upon receipt of the completed RI 20-97 from the appropriate military finance center, complete the SF 2803 (for employees covered under CSRS) or SF 3108 (for employees covered under FERS), Application to Make Service Credit Payment.

Mail the application (the SF2803 or SF3108) along

with the completed RI 20-97 and your DD Forms 214 to: Army Benefits Center – Civilian, 305 Marshall Ave., Fort Riley, KS 66442-5004.

Step 3: ABC-C will receive the application, review it for accuracy, calculate an estimate of the amount of the military deposit and send it to DFAS.

You will receive a notice from eOPF that your military deposit estimate has been uploaded into your official personnel folder.

You may then log into eOPF to view the amount of your military deposit. Also, the amount of the owed deposit will be reflected in Block 20 of your Leave and Earnings Statement.

Step 4: When you receive confirmation of your completed military deposit calculation, you may make arrangements with DFAS to pay the deposit.

Details on the available payment options may be viewed at www.abc.army.mil/retirements/FERSPost56.htm.

Step 5: Once your military deposit has been paid in full, you will need to request proof of payment.

Contact the ANAD payroll office to request the proof of payment.

When the proof of payment is received, provide a copy to your servicing human resources specialist to file in your Official Personnel Folder.

More detail information on the military buyback process may be found at: www.abc.army.mil/retirements/CSRSPost56.htm or www.abc.army.mil/retirements/FERSPost56.htm.



notes from around the TRACK

Openings at CDC

The Child Development Center, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, has openings for children of all ages.

The Center offers care for before and after school.

The program transports children to and from Oxford Elementary, DeArmanville Elementary, and C.E. Hanna (5th grade only) Schools.

Additionally, the program offers care during school out days, i.e., in-service days, fall break, winter break, spring break, etc.

Cost is based on total family income.

Child Youth Services Summer Camp registration is now open.



Camp runs from May 31 to August 6.

Families can sign up for the entire summer or for the fun filled weeks they need. Please visit www.militarychild-care.com to select designated weeks.

Summer camp fees are charged weekly and based on total family income. Payment is due the Wednesday prior to the beginning of camp week.

For more information please call 256-235-6273 or visit Parent Central in Bldg. 220

Commander's town hall

Col. Walker will hold his next quarterly town hall meeting June 16 at 7:05 a.m in Bldg. 123.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the seating is limited.

The town hall will be broadcast live on LAN channel 21 and will re-broadcast multiple times throughout the day and night.

The town hall meeting will also be available, following the live broadcast, on IPTV, where it can be viewed on-demand.

Because of the small in-person audience, employees with questions for the depot leaders should send their questions to the ANAD Public Affairs Office.

To submit questions:

- Email usarmy.anad.tacom.list.publicaffairs@mail.mil.
- Call 256-235-6281

Shoppette expands access for civilian employees

by Staff Reports

ANAD Public Affairs Office

The Exchange Express, or shoppette, at Anniston Army Depot has expanded its access to Department of Defense and Coast Guard civilian employees. The change took effect May 1 through a policy change by the DOD.

According to Lucretia Palmer, a store manager for the shoppette at ANAD, civilian employees can now purchase items such as t-shirts and mugs in addition to hotdogs and snack items.

There are limits, however. Civilian employees are not permitted to purchase alcohol, beer or tobacco products.

To make purchases, employees will need their Common Access Card.

Palmer hopes to expand the shoppette's product line now that its customer base has extended.

"We ask that employees are patient as we work to add new products to the shops," she said. "But please know we are planning to add more items soon."

According to the DOD press release, online exchange access will become available later this year for all active and retired DOD and Coast Guard civilian employees with a U.S. mailing address, including territories and possessions.

For more information about this change, please see the Department of Defense news release: <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2590000/departement-of-defense-expands-access-to-military-exchanges/>



U.S. Army Photo by Whitney Hall

Veronica Engram, a store manager, assists a customer in the Exchange Express, or shoppette, at Anniston Army Depot. The shoppette recently expanded access for Department of Defense and Coast Guard civilian employees.

Rules of the Road: Safety tips for motorcyclists

from Charity Parris

ANAD Safety Office

Over the last few years, motorcycles have grown in popularity. With the addition of trikes, even those not comfortable with two wheels can cash in on the fun. With more and more bikes on the road, motorists must be aware of their presence!

Motorcyclists must also be aware of the proper personal protective equipment to protect themselves.

Have you ever started to pull out into the road and looked but didn't see any other vehicle only to pull out and there is another vehicle right there? Perhaps it was hidden from view in your side view mirror. I know I have had this happen to me.

Being a motorcycle rider, I started to consider if an entire truck or car can be hidden from view behind my side view mirror even for a second, imagine the many places a motorcycle can be hidden from your view. After all, they are much smaller in size. This is why the phrase, "Look twice and save a life," is so important.

Military bases have more rules for motorcycles that must be followed due to service members riding motorcycles. Military bases are a little different. Operators of government-owned and privately owned motorcycles, street and off-highway, on Army installations must be appropriately licensed to operate on public highways except where not required by the applicable local laws. Active military are required to take a motorcycle safety riders course. All civilian personnel or contractors that are properly licensed to operate a motorcycle are not be required to receive Service-sponsored training or to prove that they have taken other motorcycle training in order to operate a motorcycle on a DOD installation

While riding at Anniston Army Depot, you are required by regulation to wear the following items: A Department of Transportation approved helmet, impact-resistant glasses, goggles or a full face shield, long sleeve shirt or jacket, full-fingered motorcycle gloves or mittens and long trousers. Over-the-ankle shoes or boots are also required to be worn (No sandals or open-heeled shoes). Outer upper garments must be brightly colored during the day and reflective if worn at night and passengers are required to do the same. Reflective belts are not acceptable. Your bike must have a right and left rear-view mirror, a headlight and it must be on at all times. For more information, reference DA-PAM 385-10, Chapter 11 and ANADR 385-17. Riders are highly encouraged to select PPE that incorporates protective padding, fluorescent colors, and retro-reflective material for maximum protection.

What follows are seven rules of the road written by Lori Carney, a motorcycle instructor since 2011 with Team Oregon:

Ride defensively and don't count on eye contact.

On a bike, you are the smallest vehicle on the road. You are harder to see, and sometimes you think a driver sees you, but they may not. Sometimes, while driving, you may have a moment where you realize you have



Courtesy photo

spaced out. Other drivers experience this, too. You must stay alert so that you are able to act and not react.

Don't hide in traffic.

Dress in colors that are easy to see, including your helmet. Make sure you are not in a driver's blind spot. If you realize you are in a driver's blind spot, move. If they can't see you, they can't see your turn signals either.

The bike goes in the direction your face is pointing.

Don't just use your eye to look through the turn, turn your head. Aim to the end of the turn. You are constantly scanning for hazards you might have to avoid and when you are scared your body will tense up. This can cause your eyes to snap to where your face is pointing. By turning your head partially through the turn, you could end up on the side of the road or worse, going into oncoming traffic.

In life there is no such thing as "too smooth".

Accelerating or decelerating, using the clutch, up shifting or down shifting requires smoothness.

Even if you have mastered this movement, adding a passenger changes things. A passenger completely changes the way the bike handles. And if you find yourself bumping helmets with your passenger...it is your fault as the rider. Your passenger doesn't know when you are about to upshift or downshift, apply the brakes or accelerate. Smooth is the key here to prevent helmets from bumping.

Rule of Lugnuts/Tonnage – whichever vehicle has the most of either, has the ultimate right of way.

It is always frustrating when a driver violates our right of way or if you're in a group and a driver squeezes in. Some drivers will get road rage and wave the finger. It is really about driving defensively. They are bigger and on a motorcycle, you won't win that argument.

Pay attention to what they are doing and evade their cluelessness. You can catch up when it is safe to pass.

Ride predictably.

Most motorists expect drivers to act predictably. Most drivers are not riders and most are not interested in riding. They know cars and driving them, so ride in a predictable manner. Don't hide in traffic, you will be less likely to surprise drivers around you.

Recognize fatigue/impairment.

When you are riding for a while there are many ways you can become impaired: Fatigue from time and distance, being distracted, anger or stress, temperature extremes, high traffic volumes, being sick, etc. Listen to your body and recognize fatigue or impairment. When your actions are no longer smooth and you are surprised by things and traffic, it is a clue that you are impaired. Take a break and regroup before continuing. Most people ride because it is enjoyable and when the wind hits you, you can leave your troubles behind.

By practicing safe riding it becomes a habit and that is a habit all riders need. Gear up and prepare for the unexpected. If the unexpected happens to you, you'll be glad you were prepared.

If you are interested in a riding course, the University of Montevallo offers a Motorcycle Safety Foundation training course at sites throughout Alabama. They have a wide array of classes that includes: Basic Rider Course; Basic Bike Bonding Rider Course; Basic Rider Course 2; Advanced Rider Course; Ultimate Bike Bonding Rider Course; Rider Coach Preparation Course.

For more information, contact the Alabama Traffic Safety Center, University of Montevallo, 985 Shelby Street, Montevallo, AL 35115. (205) 665-6740 or visit altsc@montevallo.edu.

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