



Naval Safety Center

LESSONS LEARNED



LL 21-09

RANDOM ACTS OF SENSELESSNESS (a.k.a. APRIL FOOL-ISHNESS)

“Did everyone see that? Because I will not be doing it again.”— Captain Jack Sparrow

Occasionally, we run across mishaps that don't bin into a specific category of task or activity due to their, let's just say, “uniqueness.” This lesson is about actions and mishaps that the Human Factors experts file under “Extreme Violation/Lack of Discipline.” In plain English, “*The decision was so bad, we can't even imagine why they did that.*” So, let's read and LEARN from a few examples of things not to do, even if it made sense at the time ... until the pain came.



- **The longest distance between two points.** As if there weren't enough ways to injure yourself while off duty, enter parkour; the “sport” where you perform impractical feats of danger to traverse from one place to another in the most difficult manner possible. From the report, a Sailor “sustained a left-shoulder injury while [performing] parkour.” The report doesn't say if the Sailor was demonstrating, performing, or pretending to execute parkour, but it does say he was under the influence of alcohol. Whatever the Sailor's sober-skill level, a muscle tear, physical therapy and 14 days on light duty probably weren't worth the alcohol-induced demonstration. — *Add parkour to our long list of things you shouldn't do while drinking (or at all, for that matter).*

- **Not getting the upper hand.** Two Sailors decided to arm wrestle while on watch (*sigh*). They might have gotten away with it if one Sailor hadn't ended up with a broken arm, (*Ouch!*). Besides the integrity issue — doing the right thing even when no one else is watching — reenacting the (*old*) Sylvester Stallone movie “Over the Top” isn't the best idea even when not on watch. Here's a not-so-fun fact: A 2020 study of South Korean soldiers' humeral (upper arm) fractures found that 53% occurred while arm wrestling. — *Please stand a taut watch, and maybe find something less harmful to do in your free time.*

- **It was an old model anyway.** A Sailor was walking at home and tripped. The report says, “the resulting fall led to his hand punching through the TV” (*hmm*). We can't imagine a scenario where one would punch through a TV during a fall, but hey, anything is possible ... we suppose. With a tendon laceration and four days on light duty TV-less, this Sailor had plenty of time to contemplate his “trip” and consider mounting future TVs high on the wall. — *We also recommend he consider taking a Tai Chi or yoga class ... Namaste.*

- **Nothing good ever happens after midnight.** Around 0010, two Marines were boxing in the barracks. One Marine was hit in the head, fell to the ground and started bleeding out of his ear. The first responder's initial diagnosis was a severe concussion, but the Marine was later diagnosed with a fractured skull and was placed in a medically induced coma for 30 days. Although the Marine is fully recovered now, we hope that he and his fellow Marines will save the boxing for formal Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) training. — *There's no joking around with that kind of injury. Please learn from this incident, and don't learn it for yourself.*

- **“Might as well Jump! (Jump!)”** [Song Lyric from “Jump” by Van Halen] — A Sailor on liberty was jumping on a bed “for multiple reasons,” according to the report. It goes on to say that the Sailor “experienced excruciating pain in [his] right knee” after it “popped out of place from jumping.”

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Undeterred by the pop and the pain, our not-so-nimble Jack the Sailor then applied ice packs and compression and “continued to enjoy the liberty port.” — *When that much-anticipated port call finally arrives, try to contain your enthusiasm. Your pride and your knees will be better off for it.*

- **“Brad, eat a Snickers.”** [It’s a meme, not an endorsement of one candy bar brand over another]. A Marine failed field-day inspection and was told he needed to clean his room again and stand by to be re-inspected the following day. Apparently, the culprit for the failed inspection was the Marine’s wall locker, so he decided to discipline it with a swift punch. Seven stitches and a day later, we have no report of more locker punching, so we assume our “mean clean Marine” passed his room re-inspection ... or he learned the hard way about restraint. — *The wall / locker / door / bulkhead always wins. Please read and learn from this Marine, vice punch and learn for yourself.*



- **Objects are closer than they appear.** The report starts off with “SNM was drinking” (*ugh*). We’ll just start off by saying don’t drink and jump off buildings. That’s right, the Marine was hanging from a second-floor balcony and “thought the ground was closer than it appeared,” according to the report. The rest of the details are scant, but whatever our Spidey-the-Marine’s injuries were, they led to a month of light duty. — *Please don’t add to our list of things not to drink and do; it’s rather long already.*



- **Don’t use your head.** A Marine was attending a concert ... in the “mosh pit.” At some point during the moshing, the Marine was struck in the head. By what, we may never know, but the force was enough to send the Marine to the hospital for three days with a subdural hematoma and a concussion. — *We suppose the days of merely holding up a lighter at a concert are over, but please consider the risks of the mosh pit. Adding to the “after midnight” saying from our earlier story, nothing good likely ever happens in a mosh pit either ... especially after midnight.*

Key Takeaways / Lessons Learned

1. **Don’t drink and [Fill in the blank].** Let’s put it this way: Just don’t drink to excess. We understand that a few drinks while hanging out with friends and family is OK. However, we beg *you* to understand that it lowers your inhibitions and raises your “bravery” level. Ease up on the drinking, and you’ll likely find that parkour and other dangerous activities weren’t really your thing in the first place.
2. **Curb your enthusiasm.** That liberty port or day off is well deserved, but make it enjoyable by not “jumping” out of the gate. Pace yourself and adhere to takeaway #1 above. If you’re that excited, hit the gym or go for a run first and blow off some steam.
3. **Give yourself a time out.** No, not the one you give your kids. We know it isn’t easy in the moment to step back and take a deep breath, but give it a try. Our database is filled with Sailors and Marines punching bulkheads, racks, walls, and more. In each incident, the circumstances leading to said punching didn’t warrant such a drastic measure (*and the situation was definitely worse with a broken or gashed hand*). If you’re feeling stressed for whatever reason (and there are many: operational tempo, finances, family separation, etc. It can all add up.), talk to someone. Your command has access to stress-management resources for you and your family.

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