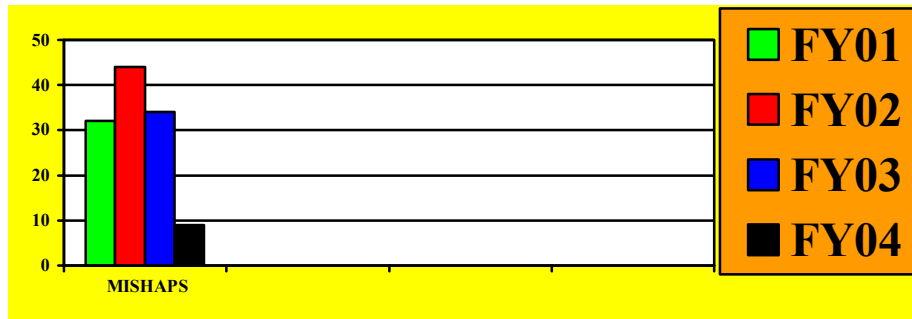


CENATNSF answers the call to reduce Small Arms Explosive Mishaps!

By Jim Hoever

The Center for Antiterrorism and Navy Security Forces (CENATNSF) began tackling the increase in post 9-11 explosive mishaps over a year ago and the Fleet is beginning to reap the benefits of those efforts. The increase in mishaps was partially created by a rapid increase of armed sailors and small arms in the Navy. In the last two quarters the number of Small Arms Explosive Mishaps has decreased by 50%, (Figure 1) and will continue to decrease as personnel receive standardized training and follow mandated procedures.

FY01-04 SMALL ARMS EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS



NOTE: FY04 DATA IS PROVIDED UP TO 1 MAY 2004

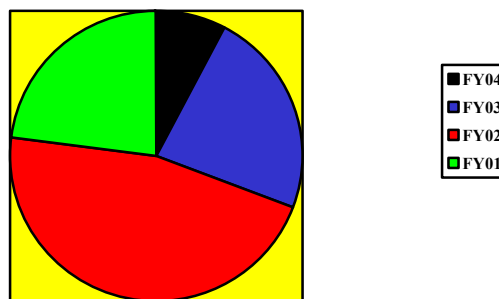
Average number of Explosive Mishaps per month:

FY01 – 2
 FY02 – 4.14
 FY03 – 2.57
 FY04 – 1.29

Figure 1

As a result of the Small Arms Explosive Mishaps there were a number of injuries sustained. The number of incidences has significantly decreased (Figure 2) in the last two quarters.

FY01-04 INJURIES CAUSED BY SMALL ARMS EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS



(FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF EACH YEAR)

FY04 Injuries – 1
 FY03 Injuries - 3
 FY02 Injuries - 6
 FY01 Injuries - 3

Figure 2

Along with developing a number of new courses to assist in training Navy Warriors in the fight on terrorism, CENATNSF took the lead in the development of the Navy Tactical Reference Publication, *Force Protection Weapons Handling Standard Procedures and Guidelines 3-07.2.2* that was approved by the Naval Warfare Development Command and mandated for use by Fleet Forces Command in August 2003. This publication, lists weapon systems commonly employed by the United States Navy. The NTRP contains detailed procedures for weapon employment techniques commonly performed when duties are

assigned requiring the arming of Naval personnel. One of the more important sets of procedures contained in the NTRP are the description of clear, concise, and standardized procedures for loading and unloading firearms when on a range or at a clearing barrel. The NTRP is organized by specific weapon and each chapter contains:

Standard nomenclature	Safe weapons handling procedures for the range
Characteristics	Safe weapons handling procedures for clearing barrel
Remedial actions	Safe weapons movement procedures
Weapons condition codes	Weapon assembly and disassembly
Weapons handling and associated commands	

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words! CENATNSF took on the task of developing *Standardized Weapons Handling Interactive Courseware* that provides visual step-by-step procedures and is aligned with NTRP 3-07.2.2. The Center first developed courseware that provided procedures for the Service Pistol, Service Rifle and Service Shotgun. Courseware has to date been completed on the M9 Pistol, M16A3 Rifle and the M500 Shotgun. A sample of what is contained in the Pistol Courseware is listed in Figure 3.

Lesson 1 - Introduction	Lesson 2 - M9 Service Pistol	Lesson 3 - Disassembly, Cleaning & Assembly
Introduction to Pistol Safety	Major Component Groups	Disassembly
Universal Weapon Safety Rules	M9 Cycle of Operation	Cleaning
	Inherent Safety Features	Assembly
	Introduction to Malfunctions and Stoppages	Function Check
	Malfunctions	
	Typical Shooter Induced Stoppages	
	Introduction to Remedial Actions	
	Clearing Stoppages on the Range	
	Clearing a Stoppage During a NHQC	
	Clearing a Stoppage During a HPWC	
	Clearing Stoppages in Tactical Situations	
	Condition Codes	
	Handling Commands	
	Safe Handling Procedures	
	Safe Movement procedures	
	Transports	
	Pistol Carries	
	Clearing Barrel Procedures	
	Pistol Shooting Stances	
	Drawing, Holstering & Reloading	

Figure 3

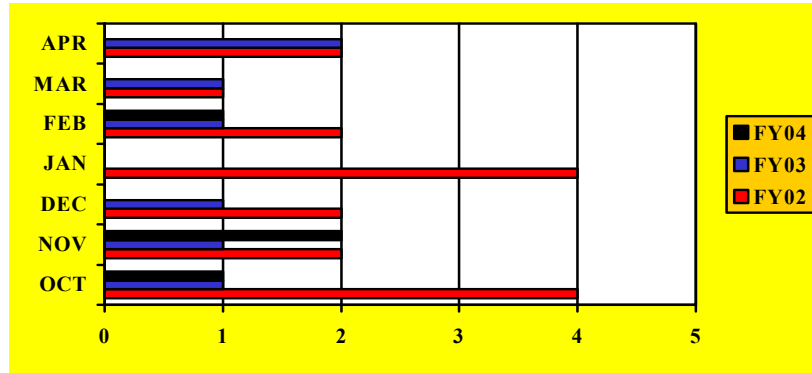
The Weapons Handling Courseware is user friendly and works with IT21 & NMCI systems. Simply put the CD in and it will play! One particular feature of the courseware that allows demonstration of a skill is the ability for the user to “click” on a subject and immediately view that subject. The courseware was primarily designed to fulfill pre-requisite training that will soon be required by OPNAVINST 3591.1D prior to live fire. A sailor can view the courseware, answer pop-up quizzes, and then take the final exam (80% required to pass). Each sailor passing the exam will receive a certificate of completion that can be presented to the Range Safety Officer (RSO). The RSO’s should then ask a series of questions, have the sailor perform some dry fire drills and make a determination as to whether that sailor is ready for live fire. The courseware can also be used by an instructor to demonstrate a particular skill. The program can then be paused and the instructor can facilitate practice drills in a sterile training environment free of live ammunition. Repetitious practice and the sailor becoming familiar with and confident with handling a weapon are the keys to success. Instructors use the courseware as well to maintain their knowledge base and hone their skills. The courseware will enhance initial and sustainment training to assist the armed sentry and trainers in maintaining their proficiency. Firearms Training is a perishable skill that is quickly lost if not routinely practiced. Training does not always have to include live fire, but can be a blended approach of classroom, courseware, simulator and dry fire to assist in maintaining proficiency. Remember however, that live fire can never be totally removed from training. Sailors need to shoot real weapons with real ammunition to feel the recoil, smell the gunpowder and to get the downrange feedback they need, to increase their confidence with particular weapon systems.

In the fall of last year CENATNSF joined forces with COMNAVSURFOR in the development of additional Weapons Handling Courseware. COMNAVSURFOR has developed a Small Arms PQS and Crew Served Weapon Courseware Set that will again be in line with the NTRP and will soon be available. This is the beginning of a new era in small arms training and trainers will have a much better toolset than they ever have!

CENATNSF has stayed at the forefront in the creation of innovative methods to train the trainers and has developed a number of courses that provide training to armed sentries and trainers. The *Commanding Officers Antiterrorism Course* opened its doors in January of 2002. During this course Commanders are briefed on the new set of tools available to trainers and the latest and greatest information on combating terrorism. The *Training Supervisors Course* began in January 2003 and is geared towards mid level managers who are charged with training sailors. The managers are provided essential training skills and they are provided copies of the tools listed above to assist them in improving sailor readiness and capability.

So as you can see, much has been accomplished in the last few years to better educate armed sentries, trainers and commanders. Currently, CENATNSF is working on the results of trend feedback from a detailed analysis of mishaps. This analysis indicated that an inordinate number of the mishaps were occurring at the Clearing Barrel (Figure 4).

**CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURE (CBP)
EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS**



FY Clearing Barrel Procedure Explosive Mishaps

FY02 17
FY03 7
FY04 5

Figure 4

Why were explosive mishaps occurring at the clearing barrel? The Clearing Barrel is designed as a safe direction to point a weapon while loading or unloading a small arm. It is designed to absorb a round if somehow discharged, while protecting personnel and equipment. There are mandated procedures and policy, but still the following questions must be asked:

- Why are some activities loading and unloading small arms without a Clearing Barrel when its use has been specifically mandated?
- Why in many instances are Clearing Barrel Supervisors not used when their presence is mandated by instruction?
- Why was a Clearing Barrel Supervisor on a cell phone, while a watchstander was unloading a weapon into the Clearing Barrel?

Clearly a level of complacency was indicated along with numerous reports of personnel not following Standard Operating Procedures. This is a trend that we all need to collectively change. Small Arms disable, maim, kill and can damage equipment. Firearms should *always* be respected and personnel handling firearms should *always* follow the four universal safety rules. These rules are displayed in the below table and if followed will prevent negligent discharges.

RULE #	SAFETY RULE
1	Treat every weapon as if it were loaded.
2	Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot.
3	Keep your finger straight and off the trigger until ready to fire.
4	Keep the weapon on safe until you intend to fire.

The question that needs to be asked now is what can we do to even further reduce the number of explosive mishaps at the clearing barrel? If we follow the simple guidance listed below we will greatly reduce the chances of an explosive mishap occurring. As long as “personnel” carry “loaded weapons” there will be mishaps, but we can all work together to minimize the occurrence. We were asked to reduce mishaps by 50%, we have done that, *but* we can still do better!

CLEARING BARREL TOP EIGHT LESSONS LEARNED

1) **Clearing Barrel Not Used** - Instructions mandate that clearing barrels will be used. The Clearing Barrel listed on Ashore and Afloat AEL's is the APC-100. These are GSA approved items and can be wall mounted or pedestal mounted. We should get away from the "locally produced" varieties, as they are not always constructed properly and can be dangerous. The APC-100 models are small, heavy duty and will absorb up to and including a .50 caliber round. For more information on the APC-100 Clearing Barrel visit www.firearms-safety.com

2) **Weapon Safety Not Checked** – When approved Clearing Barrel Procedures are properly used, checking the safety to ensure it is engaged is required during a number of steps. For instance, during loading procedures with the M9 Pistol you first check to ensure the pistol is in condition four with the slide locked to the rear, which requires checking the safety, the next step is to visually and physically check to ensure the pistol is safe and clear, prior to releasing the slide you again check to ensure the safety is engaged and prior to holstering you again check to ensure the safety is engaged. Is this overkill? If you read mishap reports you will quickly find that this is not overkill and is totally necessary. Follow mandated procedures, remain focused, do not skip steps, and do not get complacent!

3) **No Clearing Barrel Supervisor** – Instructions mandate that Clearing Barrel Supervisors shall be used. This does not mean that the supervisor can be the oncoming watch. Clearing Barrel Supervisors should be senior personnel who are knowledgeable and experienced in these procedures. They should remain alert and focused on the task at hand. They shall read each command from the Clearing Barrel Procedure Placards and then observe the armed sentry performing those individual steps.



Clearing Barrel Supervisor actively involved. Note that the supervisor is visually and physically inspecting the M9 pistol pictured here to ensure it is clear. Clearing Barrel Supervisors must be senior, knowledgeable personnel who remain focused on the task at hand.

CENATNSF personnel:
MAC Jester and GM1 Cover

4) **No Clearing Barrel Procedure Placards Posted** – Instructions mandate that Clearing Barrel Placards will be posted in a position forward of the clearing barrel so that they can be easily read. CENATNSF has developed a standardized placard. To receive an electronic copy of the placard shown below contact the Small Arms POC listed at the end of this article. If you are looking at this article on a website, click on the placard, save to a folder where you can resize and copy the placard for your use.



5) **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Not Followed** – SOP's are written to be read, understood and followed. In addition, review the NTRP and step-by-step Clearing Barrel Procedures in the Weapons Handling Courseware to ensure your procedures are correct. The procedures in these references shall be followed as described, demonstrated and mandated.

6) **Personnel Weapon Transfer On Post** – Procedures should be implemented that allow an oncoming sentry to receive a

Condition 4, action opened firearm from the armorer, assume an approved transport position as outlined in NTRP 3-07.2.2, report to the Clearing Barrel, load up as per procedure, report to Guard Mount to receive post and special orders and assume post. For the off going watch they should download at the Clearing Barrel, assume an approved transport and return the weapon to the armorer. At no time should personnel transfer weapons on post.

7) **Squeezing Trigger While At Clearing Barrel** – At absolutely no time is it ever necessary to squeeze the trigger into the Clearing Barrel. No part of Clearing Barrel Procedures directs personnel to squeeze the trigger and it should never occur. Many of the Clearing Barrel mishaps occurred when personnel squeezed the trigger during Clearing Barrel Procedures. Armed Sentries shall keep their fingers extended and outside the trigger guard alongside the receiver and Clearing Barrel Supervisors should remain observant and ensure that the Sentries trigger finger never goes inside the trigger guard.

8) **Not Removing Source Of Ammunition Prior To Checking Chamber** – In many instances during unloading, personnel armed with an M9 Pistol will first pull the slide to the rear, catch the chambered round, release the slide and then remove the magazine. Let’s examine what just occurred. Without first removing the source of ammunition (magazine), the sentry has now chambered another round when releasing the slide. Again if procedures are followed this will not occur. Always remember the following: SAFETY, MAGAZINE, CHAMBER, SAFETY! **SAFETY** – ensure safety is in safe position. **MAGAZINE** – remove the source of ammunition (magazine). **CHAMBER** – lock the slide to the rear, catch the round, hand it to the supervisor and look into the chamber to ensure it is clear. **SAFETY** – again check safety to ensure it is in the safe position. Start with the safety and end with the safety and you cannot go wrong. Follow procedure, think and remain focused on the task at hand! *Remember* - always remove the source of ammunition from small arms prior to removing the round from the chamber.



Armed Sentry is removing magazine from M16 Rifle prior to locking bolt to the rear.

CENATNSF personnel: GM1 Cover and AO1 Hecker

CENATNSF has a web portal on Navy Knowledge Online that is filled with the latest news on courses, instructions, training tips, discussion forums, etc. The portal administrator contact information is at the end of this article. The web address is <http://www.nko.navy.mil>. To remain current and in the loop, log on!

In closing, personnel handling small arms, trainers and leadership personnel are all responsible and charged with ensuring that approved procedures are followed. We cannot implement procedures that we saw on T.V. the night before, eliminate steps from procedures because, “*we have done this for years*” or not use Clearing Barrel Procedure Placards because we have “*memorized procedures*”. Procedural steps are in place for a reason. If you have not received a copy of the NTRP or the Weapons Handling Courseware, contact the POC listed below. Follow the procedures listed in these tools and you cannot go wrong! First of all they are concise and correct and second of all because they are mandated by instruction. Use the courseware to ensure you are correctly performing procedures and practice, practice, practice in a sterile training environment free of live ammunition. One more note is to ensure that dummy (inert) ammunition used in training is never mixed or in the same training area as live ammunition. Mixing munitions is a recipe for disaster.

Let’s continue to work together to better train our sailors to protect our great nation and to make sure safety is paramount in all of our minds when handling small arms. Stay Safe and stay alert.

For inquiries involving the NTRP, Weapons Handling Courseware or Small Arms Issues contact:	For inquiries involving the CENATNSF Web Portal, or courseware operation contact:
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