

Danger: Swept away at the beach

USACRC

Being pulled out to sea by a rip current is no one's idea of a fun day at the beach. But it could happen, and indeed happens often.

The U.S. Lifesaving Association estimates the annual number of deaths due to rip currents on American beaches exceeds 100, and rip currents account for more than 80 percent of rescues performed by surf beach lifeguards.

Nobody tells a story with more impact than survivors who lived to tell of their experience with rip currents. The National Weather Service features "Survivor's Stories" from those who encountered the treacherous waters, in their own words.

Kathryn of North Carolina said:

"Then a wave broke over my head, and I felt the panic rising. I know that panic is one's worst enemy in the water, so I floated and treaded water for a few minutes to catch my breath and relax. I could see my family on the shore trying to spot me in the water, but the swells were too big for them to see me waving. Once when I looked out to sea to keep an eye on the swells so I wouldn't be caught unaware again, I realized that just a little further out, there were surfers.

"Suddenly the light bulb went off in my head. Instead of trying to make it back to shore on my own, I turned and swam further out to where they were. I told them what had happened and asked if one of them would allow me to accompany him into shore using his board as a boogie board for both of us.

"Of course, one of them agreed." For Ben, his encounter with a rip current occurred on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. His story began, "It was a gorgeous day in the Outer Banks when a friend and I who were vacationing together decided to head out to the beach for some fun."

He said a short time later, they were pulled out to sea in a rip current.

"That's when sheer panic set in. We were being dragged out to sea. Meanwhile, giant waves were crashing over our heads, trying to pull us under. My friend was on my body board and I was treading water. We desperately tried



Courtesy photo

swimming towards the shore but it was no use ... the current was just too strong. We quickly became exhausted and my friend was having a panic attack. I still had my wits somewhat about me ... A lifeguard (who was sitting about one and a half football fields away, mind you) came swimming up to us. He had a flotation device and had both my friend and I grab opposing sides.

"I don't remember being pulled back to shore. My next memory is me sitting on my beach towel and my friend shaking like a leaf and coughing up water as the lifeguard and a passerby helped her calm down. I had never been more grate-

ful to be on solid ground."

These are the stories of survivors, but many others caught in rip currents were not so fortunate. To protect yourself and your family, think before you enter the water.

"Great weather for the beach does not always mean it is safe to swim said," said Wayne Presnell, NWS meteorologist. "Check the local beach forecast, including water conditions before you go, and once there, talk to the lifeguard about any unsafe conditions."

What to do in a rip current

The National Oceanic and Atmo-

spheric Administration recommends that swimmers caught in a rip current should not fight the current.

- Swim sideways out of the current, parallel to the beach.
- When out of the current, swim at an angle away from the current and toward the shore.
- Use the waves to help you along.

The NWS also advises that bathers only swim at beaches staffed with lifeguards. The chances of drowning at a beach with lifeguards are 1 in 18 million, according to the USLA.

National Rip Current Preparedness Week is June 7-13. For more information, visit <http://ripcurrents.noaa.gov/week.shtml>.

Summer Safety: Ready...Or Not?

The 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign kicked off Memorial Day weekend and the APG Employee Assistance Program of the Army Substance Abuse Program is poised to share safety messages with APG News readers throughout the season. This article is the first in that series.

According to the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, the two-year theme, "Ready...Or Not?" is designed to heighten awareness of risk factors by causing individuals and leaders to ask themselves one simple question, "Are you ready for what is about to happen?"

"Safety has a direct correlation to unit and individual readiness," the USACRC site reads. "Unit readiness is defined as having adequate personnel, materiel and supplies, equipment and training that, when properly balanced, enables immediate and effective application of military power.

According to Patricia Coburn, ASAP/EAP, the goal is to get Team APG to think twice about risky behavior and prevent unnecessary accidents.

"Through the prevention of accidents and accidental injuries or deaths, our Soldiers, civilians and their families will continue to thrive," she said.

For more information about the 101 Critical Days of Summer "Ready...Or Not?" safety campaign, visit <https://safety.army.mil/>.

SSCF fellows visit 'Little Round Top' at Gettysburg

By **JIM OMAN**

Defense Acquisition University

Twenty-five fellows comprising the 2015 Senior Service College Fellowship cohort visited Gettysburg, Pennsylvania May 5-7 as part of the group's capstone leadership experience.

The fellows, from Aberdeen Proving Ground, Huntsville, Alabama; and Warren, Michigan, and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) program directors participated in the Gettysburg staff ride – a three-day trip symbolizing the length of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863.

The staff ride was led by U.S. Army War College faculty member and lead historian Dr. Paul Jussel. The Gettysburg experience included presentations, thought-provoking questions and facilitated dialog focused on leadership topics that included leader development, decision making, succession planning, intent, vision, acquisition, technology, and logistical considerations.

Jussel masterfully framed each of these topics and posed thoughtful questions thereby enabling and challenging each of the fellows to consider the challenges and lessons learned more than 152 years ago that are just as applicable in today's environment. The Gettysburg experience began May 5 with a strategic overview presentation delivered by Jussel at the DAU-APG facility. His presentation provided the historical context for the Confederacy's invasion of the North as well as the significance of the battle of Gettysburg.

On May 6, Jussel led the group through Gettysburg, making stops at the railroad cut on McPherson Ridge, Oak Hill, and Seminary Ridge where he discussed the roles of leaders, subordinates, and the actions that each key



Photo by Ben Metcalfe

Members of the 2015 Senior Service College Fellowship cohort, from Aberdeen Proving Ground, Huntsville, Alabama, and Warren, Michigan, pose for a group photo on the "Little Round Top," hill, a key site on the Gettysburg battlefield during the group's three-day capstone leadership trip to Gettysburg National Military Park May 6.

leader made during the battle as well as the significance and the outcomes of each key leader decision.

After lunch at the historic Dobbin House, the staff ride progressed to the second leg of the tour which included visits to the Peach Orchard, Devil's Den and Little Round Top - each of which were scenes of significant close quarter combat on July 2, 1863. The ride continued along the front line trace of Cemetery Ridge, which represented the defensive positions held by the Union troops.

The final day of the staff ride, which coincided with the third and final day of

the battle, involved moving over to Seminary Ridge. Starting from the center of Seminary Ridge, the SSCF cohort fellows walked the final 1,500 yards across the open field, following the route taken by Confederate Maj. Gen. George Pickett and soldiers from his division.


Throughout the walk, fellows were able to experience and reflect upon the impact of decisions made by past senior leaders as well as contemplate their future roles as they return to senior leadership positions within acquisition.

The staff ride concluded at the Gettysburg National Military Cemetery, where Jussel recited President Abra-

ham Lincoln's Gettysburg address and ended the Gettysburg experience with a thought on the significance of the National Policy and the impact that it carries on those that serve in the armed forces of the United States.

The Gettysburg staff ride provided the fellows with one last opportunity to come together as a cohort enterprise and reflect upon the past ten months of leadership and acquisition training.

For more information about the Senior Service College Fellowship program, contact Ben Metcalfe at benjamin.metcalfe@dau.mil or call 410-272-9471.

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