

Mini-Van Is No Match



for 5-Ton Truck

By Ken Testorff

An otherwise clean military-driving record was marred when a Marine Corps lance corporal crashed an M813A1 5-ton truck and M353 trailer into a 1996 Dodge Caravan, killing the civilian driver. The military vehicles were part of a battalion's long (two-day) road march, returning to base.

It was raining when the driver of a second HMMWV ahead of the 5-ton truck stopped to let a civilian SUV in front of him turn left off the highway. Subsequently, the driver of the HMMWV immediately ahead of the 5-ton truck shifted to a lower gear to slow down and maintain

distance from the lead HMMWV. The lance corporal suddenly realized what was happening ahead of him and hit his brakes, which started the deadly chain of events.

The 5-ton truck first slid right, then began traveling left of center in a counterclockwise direction. When the driver behind the lance corporal saw the M353 trailer start to bounce, he went off the road to the right. Meanwhile, the A-driver in the HMMWV immediately ahead of the 5-ton truck thought it was going to rear-end them. Instead, though, the southbound truck turned sideways and spun across the road into a northbound lane, where it slammed into the Dodge Caravan.

Several factors combined to cause this tragedy:

- Battalion drivers didn't receive enough sleep, and longer-than-expected refueling operations and unanticipated war games in the area interrupted what sleep they did receive. Better reconnaissance