



By Capt. Jason Arthaud

In a famous scene from the movie “Jaws”, the veteran shark hunter and the younger scientist are comparing scars. The Marines mentioned in this article would do well in such a grim contest.

*You Hold It,
I'll Hit It*

These Marines were “bitten” by common, everyday Marine Corps weapons and equipment. While most Marines gain from serving in the Corps, these Marines lost:

You hold it, and I’ll hit it. During a field evaluation, a PFC and a lance corporal hurried to drive some engineer stakes into the ground. Whack! First blow. “Hold it still!” said the lance corporal. The PFC adjusted for a better grip on the stake, and the lance corporal brought the sledgehammer down for a second blow. The PFC’s thumb momentarily passed over the top of the stake just as the hammer came down. The blow severed the tip of his thumb.

5-ton truck strikes again. Echoing an earlier mishap involving a 5-ton truck rearview mirror, a corpsman placed his left hand on the edge of a 5-ton and jumped for the ground. As he dropped, his wedding band caught on the passenger-side-bed support. He landed safely but was missing most of his ring finger. Unable to save his finger, the hospital surgically amputated what remained of it.

Moving a 155 howitzer. A PFC staged his crew’s weapons while they moved their gun; he stacked all their weapons but forgot to stage his own. He rejoined his crew and pitched in to help wrestle the howitzer into position. He leaned over to grab one of the trail handles, and, as he strained to help lift, his M16-A2 slipped from his shoulder. It slid down his arm, smashing his index finger against the handle, which severed his finger at the first joint.

“I can lift it.” Attempting a two-man lift by himself, a Marine grabbed and pulled a full acetylene tank from a Mk-48/15 wrecker. He lost control of the tank, which fell and crushed his left hand, amputating his middle finger at the first knuckle.

On three, heave! Throwing steel posts with concrete footings onto a 5-ton truck, two Marines swung hard, launching them overhead to get enough height to clear the truck’s tailgate. On one attempt, one Marine let go early, and the concrete end of the post fell back. It smashed the other Marine’s right hand against the tailgate and severed the end of his middle finger.



Don’t wear rings or other jewelry.

Time and time again Marines smash, deglove, or lose fingers

because they get these items caught on vehicles, weapons, machinery, and other equipment.

Don’t put any part of your body between hard objects.

Hammers, howitzers, trailers, trucks, heavy equipment and other weapons have claimed nearly a dozen fingers over the past five years. Use ground guides and a two-man lift when required.

Wear gloves.

No Marines in these incidents were reportedly wearing gloves; if they had, their injuries would likely have been less severe, and, the lost fingers would have been easier to find. 💣