



## Second Quarter, Fiscal 2013

Senior leaders,

It's hard to believe we're already halfway through another fiscal year. Historically speaking, the first two quarters of 2013 indicate a banner year for Army safety: Total accidental fatalities were down 13 percent, and we even saw a double-digit reduction in private motor vehicle losses. It's far too early to claim victory, however, with the deadliest months of the year still ahead.

I won't get into the details behind every statistic; they're just numbers without some tangible explanation to validate them. In safety, that kind of rationale is very elusive, because we don't get reports on the accidents that didn't happen. What I can tell you, though, is that our growing focus on safety culture, backed by enhanced training and a renewed focus on discipline and standards, appears to be paying off. There are many factors contributing to the success of the past few years, but it's surely more than pure coincidence that accidental deaths are falling as we place more and more emphasis on safety. I see it in my travels — Soldiers and leaders are working hard every day, and our numbers reflect that.

That being said, we have more to do. Motorcycle fatalities are down 60 percent from this time last year, but accidental deaths in sedans and other PMVs (e.g., all-terrain vehicles) are up by more than 10 percent each. Army Combat Vehicle and on-duty personnel injury fatalities have dropped by half, but a recent fatality in a HMMWV rollover that involved an unrestrained Soldier is troubling. While a single deadly accident does not indicate a worrying trend, I caution leaders to remember indiscipline and complacency could become problems as we transition to a training and readiness posture at home station. Lastly, aviation accidents are a staggering 80 percent above 2012's year-to-date figures. Investigations into fatal mishaps from the end of the second quarter and beginning of this quarter are still in the very early stages, but aviation leaders should be focusing on the trifecta of training, discipline and standards that have kept aviators flying safely for decades.

I urge you all to consider these issues and other risks as we move forward into spring and summer. If past years are any indication, we can expect accidental fatalities to at least double during the next six months, with the bulk of those occurring off duty. Leaders must be vigilant and keep promoting a culture where safety is an around-the-clock experience, not something left behind at the end of the duty day. I commend you all for the great work you're doing, and a few folks in the field deserve special recognition for leading the way for safety in their formations.

Col. John Richardson, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, recently shared with me some of the engagement tools he and his leaders are using to keep the regiment healthy, resilient and safe. His team's Mounted Riflemen Counseling Guide is an incredibly innovative tool, and I highly recommend you contact Col. Richardson or one of his senior leaders when you get the opportunity. As we all know, leaders and Soldiers who are informed and engaged are out there "doing the right things" and "doing things right."

I'd also like to highlight two organizations that are good examples of groups that share the same goals and objectives of keeping our roads and highways safe from drunk drivers: Designated Driver of Colorado Springs and No DUI El Paso.

On New Year's Eve 2009, Designated Driver of Colorado Springs gave its first "safe ride." The nonprofit organization was founded by Ms. Nonie Rispin, her husband and their son, with the aim of reducing DUIs and DWIs by providing safe rides. Along with participating sponsors and volunteers, DDofCS has given more than 14,000 safe rides since 2009, of which approximately 8,500 went to U.S. service members. More than 700

volunteers from the Colorado Springs area, with nearly 95 percent of them coming from the military, actively participate in the organization. Nonie's ultimate goal is to have a program like this supporting every military installation nationwide. Check out their website at [www.DDofCS.org](http://www.DDofCS.org).

Spc. Tyler Rouse, 1st Armored Division Combat Aviation Brigade, formed a similar nonprofit last May called No DUI El Paso. His organization provides designated drivers to anyone in the El Paso or Fort Bliss area on weekends and gets direct support from commercial sponsors in the local area. More information is available at <http://www.noduielpaso.com/index.html>.

I absolutely commend every effort made on behalf of Soldier safety that ultimately preserves our force. These are great examples of individuals and units working alongside community organizations to provide solutions to known risks, and I appreciate Nonie, her family and supporters and Spec. Rouse and his team of Soldiers for their initiative and concern for our military members.

There are a few things in the works at the USACR/Safety Center as well. We recently received funding to upgrade the Travel Risk Planning System, while updates to existing programs are slated contingent on budget. We're also working with Fort Rucker officials to conduct beta testing of a behavioral module for inclusion in the Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic Rider Course. With at least half of this year's motorcycle accidents attributed to indiscipline, it's more important than ever to teach our Soldiers to make smart riding decisions. I'll share the results of that testing with you when it's completed.

Finally, I ask for your help in ensuring timely accident reporting. ReportIt is nearly two years old, yet we're still receiving late reports that hinder our ability to adequately analyze accident data and report trends back to you. We've taken your feedback on issues with the system and are continuing to refine it to meet the field's needs. A project this large is bound to come with some bugs, and we're working hard to fix them and give you the most user-friendly tool possible. Please have your Soldiers and safety professionals practice the system so they're familiar with it before they have to make a report.

Thank you again for all your work for safety, and please remember to stay engaged with your Soldiers these next few months. Encourage your leaders to check out this year's Off Duty Safety Awareness Presentation at <https://safety.army.mil/ODSAP> — it's a great tool for safety stand-downs and weekend safety briefings. As always, I welcome your questions and concerns about not only what we're doing at the Center, but anything you see in your formations. I'm here to help, and will do so in any way I can. I wish you all a safe and happy spring!

Army Safe is Army Strong!



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