



Third Quarter, Fiscal 2014

Senior Leaders,

After two years here at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center, the time has come for me to bid you a fond farewell as director of Army Safety. Up front, I want to thank you all for the hard work you do every day to protect our force. In just a few short years, you've turned the tide on accidental fatalities back in the right direction. The fact that our numbers remain stable with or even better than the past couple of record-breaking years reflects the impact your engaged leadership is having. Our Soldiers are safer than ever before, and it's because of the culture and example you've set for them.

Our success has only set the bar higher, so we cannot take our eyes off the ball, particularly regarding continuing safety challenges. Triumph is fragile, and complacency is its biggest threat. History shows the upcoming "dog days of summer" will test the thin line we're currently holding for a positive FY14 end state. Personnel injury-other fatalities are currently of particular concern, having approximately doubled from this time last year.

Ironically, PI-O deaths have risen while nearly all other categories remain down for the year. Motorcycle fatalities, which spiked more than expected during spring and early summer, slowed somewhat at the end the third quarter. The PMV-4 fatality rate continued to drop, falling 26 percent below FY13 numbers as of July 1. Most on-duty accident categories remained in the green as well, again with the exception of PI-O. (Weapons and explosives fatalities, which until recently were included with PI-O numbers, are now being reported in a separate accident category.) While we see no identifiable trends, the usual summer suspects — namely drownings and falls — hit us hard during the third quarter.

We know Soldiers will take advantage of the weather for swimming, boating and hiking, but neither they nor we can take their safety for granted. Just because they do the same things year after year doesn't mean they won't make a mistake this time around. The fact is these activities are inherently hazardous, and when a Soldier has made a bad decision before, lived to tell about it, and cultural pressure has not caused him or her to question that decision, we've left their fortune up to luck. When that luck runs out, it's often tragic — and many tragedies result from accidents that don't end in a fatality. Just over the Fourth of July weekend, two Soldiers suffered likely permanent total disabilities from fireworks explosions. Yes, these Soldiers should have known better than to take the risks they did, but again, we can't just assume that because they know better, they'll do better. That's why positive culture through engaged leadership works. It puts "should" into action, helping ensure our men and women take personal responsibility for their safety and make risk-informed decisions all the time, whatever their activity.

To close, I want to say again what a pleasure it's been to serve with you these past two years. What you do for safety is important to readiness and saves lives. I know you will welcome BG Jeff Farnsworth just as professionally as you have me as he assumes command of the USACRC/SC and duties as your DASAF next month. I have no doubt the Army Safety Program will flourish under his and your leadership. Thank you again, and God bless you all!

Army Safe is Army Strong!

TIMOTHY J. EDENS
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding