



Fourth Quarter, Fiscal 2013

Senior Leaders,

As fiscal 2013 drew to a close, we at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center were confident it would prove to be a promising year for safety. Now, after a few days cautiously accounting for late reports, we can say with certainty that the Army's efforts resulted in an all-time low in fatalities due to accidents. With 137 accidental fatalities, fiscal 2013 stands as our safest year ever and a significant improvement over the 1997 benchmark of 150 losses. The fact that your Soldiers accomplished this feat during our twelfth year at war not only testifies to their safety commitment and your leadership, but also strengthens evidence that we are moving in the right direction.

By the numbers, accidental fatalities as a whole were down 14 percent from fiscal 2012. Nearly every accident category experienced a double-digit decrease from the previous year, a trend that started at the beginning of 2013 and carried through to the end. On duty, Army combat vehicle and Army motor vehicle losses fell 75 percent and 25 percent, respectively, and aviation fatalities declined 33 percent for the year. Similar reductions were seen off duty; private motor vehicle deaths in sedans, historically the leader in four-wheeled PMV losses, dropped 40 percent. And after three consecutive years of sharp increases, motorcycle fatalities were down 15 percent as compared to 2012. These figures indicate that enhanced training programs, coupled with leader and peer engagement and a proactive safety culture, are paying tremendous dividends both on and off duty for our Soldiers and our Army.

Accidents not occurring on the road were up, however. Personnel injury-other fatalities, which generally comprise those accidents not defined within another specific category, rose 64 percent during fiscal 2013. The jump was due in large measure to an alarming 200 percent spike in off-duty water-related deaths, including seven drowning and boating fatalities that occurred within the fourth quarter. While this could very well be one of the anomalies of 2013 (a spate of all terrain vehicle accidents was another), it's not a problem unique to this year alone. We've seen similar clusters of these type events in recent years, and while they might not point to a specific "trend," they do merit our immediate attention, especially during the third and fourth quarters when Soldiers are exposed to additional risks off duty.

So, all in all, as an Army we did exceptionally well in 2013. We can always do better, though, and senior Army leadership has directed us to do just that. The Fiscal 2014 Safety and Occupational Health Objectives were signed in September and direct a 10 percent reduction in accidental fatalities across the force during the next year. I talked at length about each objective and ways existing programs and tools can help you meet them in the October 2013 Knowledge, available here: https://safety.army.mil/portals/0/docs/dasaf/DASAF_Oct13_7Oct2013.pdf. Given our performance during the past year, I believe we will meet or even surpass this significant mandate. The Army Readiness Assessment Program is a great place to start your reduction plan; visit <https://arap.safety.army.mil/> to get more information and have your battalion or equivalent units register for a comprehensive safety survey.

Recognizing when our Soldiers, Army civilians and organizations do the right thing for safety is a vital part of our risk management programs. Several different options for safety awards are outlined in Department of the Army Pamphlet 385-10, Army Safety Program, available at http://www.apd.army.mil/pdf/385_10.pdf. Submissions for DA-level awards are due Dec. 15, but nominations for many other awards may be submitted as opportunity permits. Points of contact for safety awards are Earnest Randle, Army Safety Office, earnest.randle.civ@mail.mil, and CW4 Lance Oldham, USACR/Safety Center, lance.e.oldham@mail.mil.

We should also look within our own ranks for best practices. Soldiers like LTC Craig Lambert of the West Virginia Army National Guard are doing great things every day. He was recently named 2013's Outstanding RiderCoach Trainer by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation for his work in organizing the West Virginia Military Motorcycle Safety Program. His vision began with a single small site where military members could practice safety maneuvers on a controlled course, but has now grown into a network of fully stocked and staffed ranges at 12 locations across the state. LTC Lambert works closely with the West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to meet the needs of military motorcycle riders, and the program has been identified as a best practice in 33 states and territories. Congratulations to Craig and his team — we appreciate all you do!

Finally, please remember the Dec. 1 deadline for training all personnel on new requirements for implementation of the hazard communication system – the Globally Harmonized System (GHS). A train-the-trainer package outlining GHS requirements is available at <https://safety.army.mil/ShrinkLink/365>. This is an important program that will standardize the classification and labeling of many hazardous chemicals, regardless of location or country of origin, and streamlines the format of safety data sheets (previously material safety data sheets). It's incumbent upon us to ensure our Soldiers and employees are trained to standard in a timely manner.

I've said before that the opportunity to serve as Director of Army Safety is a distinct privilege. There are few jobs in the Army that allow you to influence the daily lives of Soldiers in such a meaningful and positive way, while also working for and alongside our best and brightest leaders. What you do for our Soldiers, and what they in turn do for one another, saves lives every day. Thank you for all you do, and I look forward to even greater things ahead in 2014!

Army Safe is Army Strong!



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Commanding