



Third Quarter, Fiscal 2011

Senior Leaders,

Three quarters of this fiscal year have already come and gone, and I am pleased to report our Army has sustained its downward trend in accidental fatalities thus far in fiscal 2011. We closed the third quarter four percent below 2010 numbers, and projections show we can finish the year with our best safety performance in more than a decade. Statistically, however, our Soldiers are at their highest risk for fatal accidents during the final months of summer, and it will take concerted vigilance and effort from our entire team to keep our safety goals on track.

OFF DUTY

Despite an overall reduction in fatal accidents, we ended the third quarter with a slight increase in total off-duty fatalities as compared to the first three quarters of fiscal 2010 (90 versus 83, respectively). The bulk of the 33 off-duty Soldier deaths reported during the third quarter occurred on our nation's roadways, with a nearly equal split between privately owned vehicles and privately owned motorcycles. And while POV fatalities were down about 13 percent from the same timeframe last year, fatal motorcycle accidents were up nearly 50 percent at quarter's end. Continuing earlier trends, indiscipline — primarily nonuse of seat belts and excessive speeding — was a suspected or confirmed contributing factor in at least half those cases, with estimates reaching as high as 70 percent on the seat belt issue. Three Soldiers died in motorcycle crashes involving speeds of 90 to 100 mph, and two of the three were licensed and had received Army-approved motorcycle training.

These accidents highlight our Army's most pressing issue with indiscipline: Soldiers knowing the right thing to do, but simply not doing it. The standards are clear, but our Leaders must continually engage with their Soldiers to ensure their enforcement — and intervention by first-line Leaders is especially critical. The single-best way for Leaders to engage with their subordinates is to maintain an open, honest relationship with them, keeping in mind some Soldiers might require more engagement than others, while continually stressing the importance of the Warrior Ethos. On or off duty, a Soldier is always a Soldier, just as leadership is a 24/7 responsibility. Safety is a cycle that successfully repeats itself when both Soldiers and Leaders recognize and fulfill their obligations to one another, even if it means having difficult conversations and making tough decisions for the safety of a subordinate or peer.

Two final notes on off-duty trends: Fatal drownings are up 66 percent from the same timeframe last year, and while no privately owned weapon fatalities were recorded during the third quarter, negligent discharges have been on the rise this fiscal year. The three Soldier drownings reported from April to June all occurred in natural bodies of water, which present hazards not found in regular swimming pools. Swift currents, uneven and rocky underwater terrain and rip

tides are extremely dangerous for even experienced swimmers, especially when combined with the dulling effects of alcohol. And just as water should be treated with respect, so should weapons of any sort. Soldiers must know how to handle their personal weapons responsibly and understand the benefits of shooting in controlled environments like firing ranges. Again, Leader engagement is key to enhancing awareness of the hazards associated with these two fun and rewarding, yet risky, off-duty activities.

ON DUTY: GROUND

The downward trend in Class A on-duty ground accidents maintained momentum through the third quarter, with total fatalities down approximately four percent for the year versus 2010 numbers. A 67 percent reduction in fatal AMV accidents and 11 percent drop in ACV fatalities contributed largely to this success, but the third quarter was not without its share of on-duty tragedies. Two Soldiers died in HMMWV crashes; one was killed when a civilian SUV struck his vehicle head-on, and the second suffered fatal injuries after he was ejected during a rollover at a National Guard training site. In addition, we lost five Soldiers in two separate M-ATV accidents, all the result of rollovers. One Soldier died when his M-ATV veered out of control and rolled twice, while four Soldiers traveling in the same M-ATV drowned when the vehicle overturned during a river crossing. Only one crewmember in the latter accident was able to egress and survive.

Restraint system use and regular egress drills/rollover rehearsals are two of the most fundamental aspects of safe vehicle operations. Egress trainers for several MRAP variants have been installed at select CONUS and OCONUS locations, and I encourage you to take advantage of this important training opportunity before your unit's next rotation to theater. In addition, be sure to add Training Circular 7-31, MRAP Family of Vehicles Driver Training, to your unit library. This comprehensive guide provides the information your vehicle crews need to conduct their missions safely and is an essential part of every trainer's toolkit. Conversely, enforcing restraint system use requires nothing but a Leader's time and attention, so ensure your front-line supervisors are ensuring this simple yet vital step is taken each and every time a vehicle rolls outside the wire.

ON DUTY: AIR

Eight Class A aviation accidents and four associated fatalities (three military and one Civilian) were recorded during the third quarter. While these figures represent a sharp increase from accidents recorded during the first two quarters of fiscal 2011, aviation fatalities as a whole are down 36 percent from the previous year. Human factors were cited as primary in seven of the nine incidents, while the remaining two accidents were attributed to materiel failure. Commanders must continue to stress the importance of realistic home station training while paying particular attention to mission execution and associated risks within the first 90 days of entering a new area of operations. An initiative that continues to show huge dividends for our

aviation formations is High Altitude Mission Environmental Training, launched by the USAACE a few years back and being used very successfully by our aviation task forces as they prepare for deployment. This one-of-a-kind training opportunity allows aviation task force commanders to collectively train the challenging skill sets required of their formations downrange.

USACR/SAFETY CENTER INITIATIVES

For many safety officers and Soldiers, reporting an accident can be an arduous task that only adds stress to an already tense situation. To answer the need for a more streamlined reporting process, the USACR/Safety Center will introduce ReportIt, a new, consolidated accident reporting tool, on 3 October 2011. The new system modernizes our existing reporting capabilities with a pre-populated interface similar to popular tax preparation software and is designed to collect all injury and loss data for the total force, whether military, Civilian or contractor. The initial launch will cover both on- and off-duty ground and aviation accidents, with additional modules for UAS/aerostat reporting and a portable disc for non-networked systems being phased in through fiscal 2012. We are currently conducting beta testing at five locations—Fort Benning, Fort Campbell, Fort Sill, Fort Indiantown Gap and McAlester Army Depot—so please talk with your contacts there for their feedback on the system.

For several years, our USACR/Safety Center task force directors (Air, Ground, Driving and Human Factors) have presented a redeployment safety brief to brigade and division commanders and safety personnel to help them prepare for potential hazards during their return to home station from theater. These hour-long briefs are conducted via VTC approximately 120 days prior to redeployment and cover both on- and off-duty hazards while highlighting current trends and safety initiatives. The days and weeks leading to and just after redeployment are a very vulnerable time for Soldiers, and the information shared through these briefs is invaluable in helping Leaders identify risk factors within their formations. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to schedule a brief for your unit's next rotation out of theater.

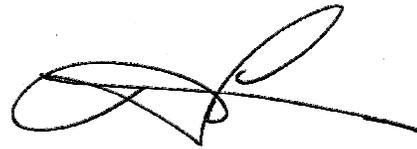
Safety professional training — CP-12, ground additional duty safety officer and aviation safety officer — is among our highest priorities at the USACR/Safety Center. Every individual trained through these programs, whether military or Civilian, is a tremendous asset to both Leaders and Soldiers in the field. Rigorous training and continuing education opportunities equip safety professionals with the knowledge and skills to successfully advise commanders on all areas of risk facing Soldiers, both on and off duty. I encourage you to seek out the safety personnel within your formations and empower and challenge them to make a difference. You will find no better advocates for Soldier safety than the dedicated men and women performing these vital roles.

Finally, we work every day to give you and your Leaders and Soldiers the best, most up-to-date information and products available to keep everyone safe. Our website, <https://safety.army.mil>, is a central repository for best practices from around our Army and home to many programs and tools designed to enhance Leader, Soldier and Family awareness. The Better Opportunities for

Single Soldiers Safety Factor, Firearms Safety Techniques challenge, Water Safety challenge, Motorcycle Mentorship Program, Family Engagement Kit, various toolboxes and many other tools all are just a click away from our home page. Please leverage our site and share what works for you and your Soldiers with others — and as always, let us know how we can do better!

Thank you all for what you do every day for our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. Your hard work is making a tremendous difference, and I am confident fiscal 2011 will be among our best years yet for safety. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and remember to play it safe!

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William T. Wolf
Brig. Gen., USA
DASAF and Commander,
Combat Readiness/Safety Center