



## Senior Leaders

Fiscal 2011 has come to a close, and it gives me great pleasure to report our Army has maintained its incredible momentum in fatal accident prevention for a fourth consecutive year. Reducing accidental fatalities during a time of war is unprecedented in our Army's history, and each of you should be proud of the tremendous job you and your Soldiers have done these past few years. It hasn't always been easy, but we keep getting better and better as an Army at the fundamentals of safety. Thank you for what you do every day!

### OFF DUTY

Every success comes with challenges, and off-duty fatalities continue to be the single-most pressing safety issue facing our Army. Overall, we closed the year about six percent above fiscal 2010's off-duty numbers, due primarily to a nearly threefold increase in personnel injury-other (PIO) accidents (27 versus 7) and an 18-percent rise in fatal motorcycle accidents (45 versus 38). Fiscal 2011's PIO fatality count - led by drownings, falls, and privately owned aircraft accidents - was the worst recorded since fiscal 2007, when 30 Soldiers died in off-duty PIO mishaps. We did show some areas of improvement, however, including declines in deaths related to other POV (trucks, sport utility vehicles, vans, mopeds and all terrain vehicles), sedans, and pedestrian (the most dramatic reduction at 67 percent). In fact, POV fatalities were down five percent for the year despite the increase in motorcycle-related deaths.

Moving forward into 2012, all our focus should be on curbing indiscipline. We had several motorcycle fatalities involving speeds of 90 mph or greater during fiscal 2011, and Leaders at the grade of E5 to O4 comprised 64 percent of the year's motorcycle deaths. Junior Leaders are critical in our fight against preventable accidents, but when they disregard the standard and act recklessly, it sets a precedent of irresponsible behavior that affects unit personnel on and off duty. The Soldiers these Leaders supervise are almost invariably young and impressionable, and this critical time in their careers is our best opportunity to foster a safety mindset. Indiscipline from any Soldier, but most especially our Leaders, is never excusable, and as senior Leaders, we have to reach our subordinates down the chain of command to ensure they are setting and maintaining the highest possible standards within their formations.

Proper training is equally important. As of 1 October, the Progressive Training Model is now mandatory for all Soldiers riding motorcycles, whether on or off post. New requirements include completion of the Military Sportbike Rider Course (MSRC) or Experienced Rider Course (ERC) within 12 months of graduation from the Basic Rider Course (BRC), followed by sustainment training every three years and refresher training after every 180 days or greater deployed. Please ensure your commanders understand the updated requirements in Army

Regulation 385-10 and enforce the new standard with their Soldier riders. In addition to the progressing motorcycle training the Army has also instituted a new Remedial Driver Training program that takes the best in the civilian community and utilizes it to try and change Soldier behavior before it results in an accident or worse.

## **ON DUTY GROUND**

On duty safety has been a great news story for our Army during the past several years, and fiscal 2011 was a banner year for our Soldiers in garrison and in theater. All on-duty accident categories with the exception of PIO saw double-digit reductions during the year, led by a 67-percent drop in fire and explosives fatalities. Vehicle crews also logged one of the safest years on record, with drops in both Army combat vehicle and Army motor vehicle deaths. These reductions represent a remarkable turnaround from fiscal 2010, when we experienced increases in nearly all on-duty fatality categories. We are at our lowest point in on-duty losses and it is directly due to Engaged Leaders and Soldiers looking out for each other.

The lives saved during fiscal 2011 are cause for celebration, but the inescapable fact is we lost 27 Soldiers on the ground throughout the year. We must stay focused on Leader engagement, standards enforcement and important programs like driver training to maintain the positive momentum in on-duty accident prevention. We also have to remember that every on-duty activity has its inherent risks - negligent discharges, parachute mishaps and exposure to the elements all claimed Soldiers during fiscal 2011. Please continue engaging with your Leaders and ensure they, in turn, are engaging with their Soldiers on the risks involved with tactical operations and enforcing standards on the job.

## **ON DUTY AIR**

Aviation safety performance made a remarkable turnaround in fiscal 2011, with fatal accidents dropping 31 percent from the previous year. Two deadly accidents occurred during the fourth quarter, both day training incidents that involved impact with the ground and killed two Soldiers each (one aircraft was an OH-58DR and the other an AH-6M). We also suffered total losses of two aircraft in Afghanistan late in 2011: an AH-64D that crashed after its tail rotor failed, and a CH-47F that received Class A damage after a hard landing.

After a decade of war and unprecedented demand for aviation assets in combat, it can be easy to lose sight of just how dangerous aircraft operations are in training and on a mission. There is no margin for error in aviation, and commanders must continue to stress the risk management process and crew coordination in home station training as well as on mission. Building a consistently safe aviation force for every environment, whether in garrison or in combat, begins with programs like High Altitude Mountain Environmental Training. By having aviators participate in real-world scenarios within the confines of controlled training exercises, Leaders can safely instill the fundamental values of crew coordination, mission planning and overcoming terrain and environment in even the most demanding conditions.

## **CLOSE OUT**

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to thank you all for your support during my tenure as the Director of Army Safety and Commanding General, USACRC/Safety Center. I'll be handing over command to Col. Clay Hutmacher later this month and, after 32 years in uniform, Sandy and I will be starting a new journey in civilian life. It has been an honor and a supreme privilege to serve alongside each of you, and I'll always treasure the friendships I've made while in this position and throughout my time in service. There is no more noble goal than protecting the lives of our Army's men and women, and I am eternally grateful for all the hard work each of you have done on behalf of our Soldiers, Family members, and Civilians-thank you for your continued selfless service.

Keep up the great work, and I look forward to hearing of even more successes for safety in the months and years ahead. We truly have the best team leading the best Army in the world today.

**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