



## Rules to Live By

There is a disturbing new trend in our military—some units are experiencing the loss of more Soldiers at home station than deployed to combat!

Multi-National Force-Iraq Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill once told me a Soldier knows what is important to a unit within an hour of arriving. If a unit has standards and discipline, it is very apparent. However, if Soldiers sign in and the unit leaves them to their own devices, they'll take it that nobody cares enough to ensure they don't get into trouble. Once they have gotten that message, it can be hard to make them believe anyone takes their off-duty actions seriously. We know when an attitude like that sets in, it can be hard to overcome because Soldiers don't afford Leaders opportunities at second and third chances.

So how do we make this work for the safety of Soldiers? When it comes to our married Soldiers redeploying home, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center (USACRC) has worked with Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) to create the Family Engagement Kit. The kit provides spouses with useful tools and resources to help them care for their Soldiers as they return. And for single Soldiers, there is the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) Engagement Kit.

During a recent redeployment video teleconference (VTC), Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, stated, "All accidents are preventable and predictable." I couldn't agree more with him and his philosophy. As I speak with Soldiers, Families and Civilians, it becomes very apparent we are headed in the right direction in fighting and winning the Global War on Terrorism. Nearly seven years into this fight, we are seeing the fruits of our labor and appear to have turned the corner. Winning the war on accidents at home station is another story. Two-thirds of all accidents happen at home station during off-duty hours. Why is it that it's safer, statistically speaking, to drive on duty and in combat than on the streets back at home station? Most would say that engaged leadership directly influences our on-duty accident numbers. If that is true, then why doesn't engaged leadership work off-duty as well? So I ask each of you, how can we transition the great work we do during deployments back to home station?

### Recipe for Safe Home Station Operation

- Using "tough love"—imposing strict standards and discipline will save lives. Because of that, we need to plan for redeployment by assessing the risks much the same as we do for combat. Assess the risks, which include anything that will take a Soldier from our ranks. Conduct a VTC with your headquarters, BTC's home station and safety center 90 days out.
- Have your rear detachment advise you about the risks at home station seen following previous redeployments.
- Prepare to receive and account for Soldiers. Most Soldiers are lost 30 days prior to redeployment till 30 days after.
- Be proactive and energize your garrison's MWR as early as possible to provide Soldiers and Families with events to do on the installation after block leave. It's your city; keep your constituents at home, where you can influence their behavior while having fun.
- Provide predictability. Predictable training and time off during reset doesn't waste Soldiers time and provide Families with knowledge of when they can expect them home.
- Monitor "Leader-to-led" and address leadership gaps.
- Emplace mentorship/certification programs to train and address deficiencies throughout your ranks
- Train safety as part of every mission and seek feedback from your organization during the after-action review (AAR) process.
- Conduct tough, realistic individual training as early as possible and incorporate driving training to solidify teams.

Move left of the boom so redeploying Soldiers don't become statistics. Use your influence as Leaders to train Soldiers to be safe on duty so they'll choose to be safe when they're off duty. Remember, what they do on the installation, you can influence—what they do off the installation you have to react to.

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