



After serving in this great Army of ours for more than 25 years, one thing has become clear to me: Soldiers keep making the same mistakes when it comes to their safety and well-being. There's no doubt the dedicated Soldiers who make up our Band of Brothers and Sisters work hard to fulfill their difficult missions. However, many of them play just as hard in their off-duty time, and that's where the vast majority of our accidents are happening.

The Soldiers we often see in accident reports, especially those involving privately owned vehicles, are young adults taking the same risks many of us did at their age, fueled by bravado and a sense of invincibility. But just because we were reckless once doesn't mean we should tolerate risky behavior from our Soldiers today. Leaders must be Leaders — we have to set the standard of responsibility, accountability and discipline for our subordinates. And when our Soldiers don't live up to these standards, it's our duty to both correct and mentor them as they find their way.

While this awesome job sometimes calls for us to be tough, we also have the opportunity to empower our Soldiers to make smart decisions for themselves. Over the years, I've learned that telling Soldiers what they can't do, especially in their off-duty time, is often counterproductive. It's nearly a given that many of our Soldiers are going to engage in high-risk activities when they're not at work. We know this, and we must embrace the fact and move forward — not with the intent to stop them, but rather to help them understand how they can participate in these activities safely.

Our Army is realizing this concept through the Warrior Adventure Quest program, which has taken Soldiers on high-adrenaline recreational activities such as mountain biking, whitewater rafting, rappelling and caving in a safe, education-centered environment. As dwell time between combat tours increases, Leaders will need to find creative ways to incorporate similar programs and other educational and teambuilding initiatives like intramural sports into their training schedules. These positive pursuits build stronger and safer Soldiers by channeling their creative energy toward hobbies that fulfill twin goals of physical fitness and safety awareness.

This same creative energy is abundant in the videos submitted thus far during our second annual Peer to Peer Safety Video Competition, which runs through April 30. It's obvious from the videos we've received that our amateur moviemakers have had a lot of fun with the contest, and your Soldiers can too. As an added incentive, the top three entrants will share a prize purse of nearly \$4,000 provided by the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program. Make a video, save a life and maybe make some money — it's really that simple. Contest rules and details are available on the USACR/Safety Center Web site (<https://safety.army.mil>), along with several innovative tools to assist you in developing and implementing safety and training programs geared toward your unit's needs.

Please stay hands-on and remember what's important — keeping those Soldiers you lead safe. I look forward to working with you, and thank you for all you do for our Band of Brothers and Sisters.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike Eyer'.

CSM Michael Eyer
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

