



Tackling Everyday Risks

Happy Birthday, America! For 232 years, our country has been known as the land of the free and home of the brave because of the Soldiers and servicemembers who have sacrificed to defend her against all enemies – foreign and domestic. At this very moment, that sacrifice continues. We at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center commend every one of you on your tireless dedication to duty. A lot has changed in the 233 years since our Army was established. Our Army has served the greatest nation in the world. Change and transformation is nothing new to the Army, but how we train to meet an evolving threat may be the Army's greatest challenge to date. Whether in or out of country, on or off duty, the greatest enemy to our safety is risk. Risk is inherent in our line of work, but can often be mitigated by experience, planning and training. Below are three ways we can tackle everyday risks that can affect our safety:

- The fielding of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle was designed to meet an evolving threat. Training has been developed to meet the user's needs immediately, providing 40 hours of instruction in the same geographic location as the user. The plan provides systems at home station and VISMOS at CTC in which to train and gain valuable experience prior to the deployment. I had the opportunity to sit through this training and drive an MRAP during a recent visit to Operation Enduring Freedom. It is a tremendous improvement over the M1114s we drove on my two previous rotations to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Unfortunately, there are two ghosts still haunting us from the M1114 days that we have yet to overcome: Soldiers assigned at the last minute and Soldiers not wearing seat belts. There is nothing that can substitute training and experience before a deployment. The myth about being better off not wearing seat belts when riding in a vehicle outside the wire couldn't be further from the truth. If you truly believe this misconception, train as you fight. Put on your gear and take a spin in the HEAT trainer without your seat belt. You'll suffer at least two blows – one produced by the initial accident and another when you're thrown about the inside of the trainer. Hopefully, you won't be knocked unconscious because you still have to remove yourself from the M1114. Bottom line, wear your seat belt.
- Driving a privately owned vehicle (POV) is the single most dangerous event we engage in on a daily basis. Many installations have enacted driving centers of excellence to educate drivers and better prepare them for what may lie ahead. Nearly 80 percent of all active duty sedan accidents are committed by drivers under the age of 25. Through the use of classroom instruction, simulators and several other tools, we are gaining the initiative in military and civilian driving. Recently, the Army and Navy combined their efforts to develop and field a motorcycle sportbike course. This course was designed to better prepare the rider for the challenges of riding a sportbike. Riders over the age of 25 represent nearly 70 percent of all active duty motorcycle accidents, and a large majority of those accidents occur on sportbikes. I believe most of these POV accidents are a result of bad habits learned while driving in theater. Slow down or you may not make it to your destination. Lastly, that five-star safety rating on your vehicle means nothing if you don't use the safety equipment, so buckle up!
- Communicating effectively is probably one of the least understood leadership skills in our Army. I'm not just talking verbal and nonverbal communications that involve active listening skills and two-way

conversations. I'm talking about knowing your Soldiers and the effective use of Information Operations to defeat or neutralize a threat. For example, somewhere there is a group of Soldiers waiting to be released. They'll likely get the traditional "if you drink, don't drive, if you have sex, wear a condom" brief. Yet, in theater, we plan and rehearse a two-click movement for hours. Both have inherent risks and need to be planned for accordingly. Good risk mitigation starts by effectively communicating the how, what, where, when and why of the threat you're about to face. We have made great strides in theater and have effectively transformed to an evolving threat, yet we have seen a steady increase in automobile accidents and fatalities.

Soldiering is a noble profession and each of you can be proud of your service to our great nation. Take the time during this Independence Day to reflect on what you have accomplished. While doing so, continue to prepare and train for the evolving threats that you will face – on and off duty.

Army Safe is Army Strong!

Tod L. Glidewell

Command Sergeant Major

U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center