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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ground safety initiatives support National Safety Month**

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In recognition of National Safety Month, members of the Ground Directorate encourage everyone in the Army Family to take time and think about safety no matter what the activity may be – walking across a street, shooting an assigned or privately-owned weapon, swimming at the beach or driving a Stryker.

While there's been a decline in Army accidental fatalities in recent years, there's still room for improvement when it comes to reducing losses said Lt. Col. James J. Smith, director of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center's Ground Directorate.

"On- and off-duty ground accident fatalities decreased between fiscal years 2007 – 2010," Smith said. "We've made significant strides in Army Safety with user-friendly tools, initiatives and with the help of engaged leaders throughout our ranks creating an atmosphere of risk mitigation. However, in fiscal 2011, we sadly lost 57 Soldiers – 13 more than the year before."

To combat these unnecessary losses, Smith said the Army must not relent on its safety efforts.

"A leader's attempt of reaching even the most junior Soldiers in our ranks, and impressing upon them the importance of taking ownership of their safety is a constant effort but not a futile one," he said. "We can reduce unnecessary losses in our formations through communication."

According to USACR/Safety Center statistics, the risk for injuries and accidents traditionally peak in the last two quarters of each fiscal year. During summertime, Soldiers and their Families are likely to go outdoors for entertainment, where they are exposed to warmer temperatures and risks associated with activities such as swimming, sports and physical training. Likewise, winter brings hazards associated with inclement weather, including dangerous roadways, exposure to freezing temperatures and risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

"In our directorate, we'll continue to monitor the trends and focus our efforts on equipping Soldiers, leaders and safety professionals with tools that will assist them in accomplishing their mission safely," Smith said.

The Ground Directorate conducts analyses of Army accidental loss, identifies trends and proposes courses of action to affect loss prevention. The directorate leverages Army,

Department of Defense, other government agencies and civilian sector best practices to develop programs to influence change and improve combat readiness Army wide.

“Senior Army leadership endorsement of National Safety Month is just one more instance of how we (the Army) are committed to saving lives,” Smith said. “Loss of life to a preventable accident is tough, especially when there are so many mechanisms in place to negate mishaps. There’s no such thing as over-communication when it come to safety and it’s everyone’s responsibility to do their part to reduce preventable accidents across our Army.”

There’s a correlation of efforts between the creator of National Safety Month, the National Safety Council, Ground Directorate and USACR/Safety Center – raise public awareness of safety and save lives.

“The National Safety Council is very pleased to see the efforts of the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center in promoting National Safety Month,” said Janet Froetscher, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. “While June is a time for the nation to bring safety to the forefront, safety should be a 24/7 pursuit every day of the year. Encouraging education and behavior change on the leading causes of preventable injury and death, and sharing this information with those you care about, will help make a difference.”

To learn more about National Safety Month and summer safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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