



Forging the Way Ahead

Another season of change is upon us, and our Army is getting summer off to a great start by officially observing National Safety Month during June. Army Leadership is asking that commanders across the force take this opportunity to evaluate their safety programs and prepare for the months ahead, which are historically the deadliest time of year for our Soldiers off duty. I'd like to kick off the month and the 101 Critical Days of Summer with an evaluation of my own, looking at the amazing strides our Army has made for safety and the people who have made that success possible.

First, I cannot express how proud I am of the way our Leaders have grown during the past decade. They have accepted every challenge put before them and accomplished increasingly complicated missions not only well, but more safely than ever. From the first-line Leader through the entire chain of command, engagement has been the key to our Army's historic reduction of preventable accidents during wartime. This is a feat unprecedented in our nation's history, and it couldn't have happened without our Leaders remaining focused and looking out for their Soldiers all the time.

Our Soldiers have grown right along with their Leaders. Those of us who wear the uniform have always been concerned for one another's well-being, but I've never seen the level of engagement regarding safety among peers as what exists today. Whether it's reminding a friend to wear a seat belt or personal protective equipment, slowing down on the highway or calling a cab after a night of celebrating, Soldier-to-Soldier engagement is making a huge difference in both on- and off-duty safety. I commend our men and women for the fantastic job they are doing for each other and ultimately our Army, whether on patrol in Afghanistan, in the barracks back home or at a backyard cookout.

After more than 10 years of war, our Family members have shown an amazing resilience and accepted the hardships of Army life with grace and dignity. Our Army remains ready for any challenge because its backbone, our Families, is forged with steel that gets tougher by the day. As such, our spouses, children, parents and siblings have proved indispensable in promoting safety. Leaders, please remember to include your Families in your safety programs — we owe it to them as part of the Army Team and, when aware of the risks, they are a vital and influential part of your safety program, helping our Soldiers make the right life decisions to stay safe.

Additionally, our safety professionals and Army Civilians continue to work diligently to keep Soldiers safe. I've said many times there is no more noble goal than striving for Soldier safety, and I emphatically repeat that statement now. Our Civilian safety professionals often work in the shadows of day-to-day operations, but their impact is felt all the way to the front line. Commanders are extremely fortunate to have these highly educated and motivated professionals within their ranks, and I encourage you to take full advantage of their expertise in all matters. Even the most mundane of topics could have safety implications, and the knowledge and wisdom of these safety professionals has proven priceless both in theater and back home.

Finally, the USACR/Safety Center team has grown and evolved with the rest of our Army Family. Leaders and Soldiers have provided invaluable feedback that has led to important changes in the way we provide training, outreach and tools to help them live safer lives. Army safety is becoming more professionalized and mainstream than ever, and this success is due to the combined efforts and support from senior Army Leadership, Leaders in the field, and the work accomplished daily at the USACR/Safety Center.

Whether you're a Leader, Soldier, Family member or Civilian — thank you for what you have done and continue to do. It has been an honor to serve alongside each of you, and I ask that you welcome our incoming director of Army Safety, Brig. Gen. Tim Edens, with the same enthusiasm you have shown me these past three years. I have no doubt our mission will continue to flourish in his capable hands, especially with your help. Now and always, we will see you on the high ground; in the meantime, continue to keep safety a part of all you do each and every day, on and off duty.

God bless our Soldiers, their Families and our Army Civilians!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William T. Wolf
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding