



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

S: 15 November 2002

AFZF-GA-SAFE

18 September 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Winter Holiday 2002-2003 Safety Campaign

1. The Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year holiday season is fast approaching. Even now, soldiers and family members are planning for family reunions during this time. The holidays should be a time for celebration and relaxation. This is not always true. During the three previous holiday seasons, III Corps has lost a soldier and/or a family member due to a needless accident, automobile crashes and suicides. This is why our number one priority during the upcoming holiday season must be ensuring the safety and welfare of our soldiers, civilians, and family members. Our holiday accident prevention plans must start now and must encompass more than a safety briefing just prior to the release of our soldiers for one of the holiday periods. As many of you know, during the Christmas/New Year's holiday last year, not a single soldier was killed in an accident or vehicle crash. This was wholly due to commanders personal engagement in the risk mitigation factors associated with this usually deadly time of year. As such, I again charge commanders with developing and implementing aggressive programs that will safeguard our soldiers, civilians, and family members. Our goal is not a single death in the Corps over the Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year holiday period. I want MSC commanders to provide directly to me the details of your plans in writing **NLT 15 November 2002**. This can be via written memo or email. I'd ask that it be your personal assessment and plan.

2. I regret that 29 III Corps soldiers died so far this fiscal year due to various accidents. This is an approximate 12 percent increase from the same period last year. Needless to say, not something we can take pride in. While we have shown an improvement and a downturn in privately owned vehicle (POV) deaths to date, POV crashes continue to claim more lives than all other accidents combined. So far this year, 15 POV crashes have resulted in the deaths of 16 soldiers. Excess speed, fatigue, aggressive driving, and impaired driving (alcohol usually) are primary causes of POV accidents. Many of these accidents occurred during our Summer Safety Campaign. Our efforts did not work as well as we had hoped. We must now double our efforts as we approach the holidays. The standard weekend briefings, POV inspections, and safety campaigns are not enough. Battalion commanders and their command sergeants major must influence unit accident prevention initiatives with their leadership and experience. Unit programs must be broad enough to protect our soldiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We owe it to them to be caring and most importantly effective leaders, both on- and off-duty.

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Another important and sad statistic is that suicides have taken the lives of three III Corps soldiers so far this year. The holiday season may be a very lonely time for some soldiers and family members that are a long way from home and family. Your prevention plan must take these soldiers and family members into consideration and provide for an aggressive suicide prevention operation in your commands.

3. Statistics show that young soldiers, to include young leaders, are at the highest risk for accidental death. The typical profile for "high risk" soldiers include those who are high school drop-outs, are in the grades of E1 to E4, have fewer than 5 years of service, are single (separated or divorced), have had multiple traffic violations, and have known incidents of alcohol abuse. This is valuable information that should be used for conducting formation type briefings, but we must go beyond the standard unit safety briefings. To accomplish this task, unit commanders must conduct thorough, meaningful command briefings. Additionally, first-line leaders must engage one-on-one with each of their soldiers.

a. As a minimum, battalion and company commanders must use the following specific holiday related risks to develop and implement their unit accident prevention campaigns: POV, fire prevention, carbon monoxide poisoning, seasonal hazards, alcohol usage, and suicide. Additionally, review the unit accident experience and soldier profiles to identify high risk activities and personnel. Build programs to combat these risks. Reinforce safety standards at each level of command briefing. I encourage you to use subject matter experts to assist with your efforts. There are a number of valuable resources such as installation and command safety offices, Alcohol and Drug Control Office, local law enforcement agencies, preventive medicine, fire department, etc. The Army Safety Center's website (<http://safety.army.mil/pages/tools>) is full of resources, such as the "POV Toolbox."

b. Our first-line leaders, under the supervision of battalion commanders and command sergeants major, must develop comprehensive, hard-hitting safety talks. These talks should be a two-way dialogue between the leader and soldier. They should be an informal, "foot-locker" session that reinforces command safety guidance. The leader must ask leading questions so that a determination can be made on the soldier's ability to identify and mitigate risk. The discussion should continue into the soldier's planned holiday activity plans. The Next Accident Assessment is a valuable tool to assist the leader. The leader needs to mentor the soldier on hazard identification and risk mitigation of proposed activities. These sessions should conclude with a "contract" between the leader and the soldier, with the leader ensuring that their soldiers fully understand their role as safety standard bearers. These safety talks must be a continuous process throughout the holiday season.

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4. We must be fully committed and engaged to ensure that every soldier, civilian, and family member is properly prepared prior to being released for the holidays. This requires vigilant, caring leadership, and discipline from the unit's senior leader to the most junior soldier. This is a continuous process that must be constantly reinforced. Together we can make this a safe and enjoyable holiday season. This will not be an easy task, but our efforts will reap great dividends if every soldier, civilian, and family member returns safely.



B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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