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My job requires extensive travel, which means I'm often at airports throughout the U.S. and abroad. I swell with pride when I see young Soldiers at these airports, returning from deployed locations to the loving arms of their Families.

I often wonder how long they have been Soldiers, from where did they depart, where they are going and who they will meet. I also wonder if these Soldiers were prepared to travel and, more importantly, if they're prepared for what awaits at their destination.

Right or wrong, I somehow believe that Soldiers are best cared for when they are in the company of fellow Soldiers. Somewhere in my years of training and experiences with our great Army, I firmly believe that the best supervision a Soldier can have is in the unit, where there is compassionate professional leadership to watch and protect. I portend that the NCOs and officers that either launched or stand ready to receive these Soldiers are best prepared to take care of them. Even knowing that 40 to 50 percent of the Soldiers I see are en route to a theater of conflict, I am convinced that where there is an engaged Leader, these Soldiers are protected.

We learned from our initial entry that there are two ironclad priorities in military operations that are engrained in us: mission accomplishment and the welfare of our Soldiers. These priorities are as applicable in war as in peace. The honor of ownership and the responsibilities pertaining to the well being of those in our ranks lies with us. Within our formations, our Soldiers have battle buddies, NCOs and officers that attempt to ensure they make it home safely from their deployment. However, I contemplated who at home serves as guardian? The answer is simple—you, I and Family members.

As we build relationships with our Soldiers, we understand what makes them tick. Use tools such as the Leader's Accident Risk Assessment of Subordinates and Accident Risk Assessment for Individuals to help identify individuals in your formations who might be at risk for an accident. Both assessments can be found on the USACRC Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>. You can mitigate risk factors if you are aware risk exists, and your chain of command can help. As Leaders, identifying and knowing your Soldiers is paramount to protecting them.

You all should understand that as an Army having fought for six-plus years, daily executing Warriors task and drills, we can't allow ourselves to think our only enemy is the one we engage on battlefields. As informed and engaged Leaders, we must remain focused on keeping our comrades safe with the same vigor we execute on the battlefield. I am proud of your Herculean efforts in protecting our Soldiers on both battlefronts, home and abroad.

Thank you - and An Army Safe is An Army Strong!!

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Commanding