



COMMANDER
UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
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MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5101

18 January 2013

TO: CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

SUBJECT: Killed In Action (KIA) Reduction Initiative

1. Gentlemen, I want to bring to your attention the results of a recently completed comprehensive pre-hospital care study from Operations IRAQI FREEDOM, NEW DAWN, and ENDURING FREEDOM, for your consideration as we all work to provide the best care possible for our troops in harm's way.
2. A recent comprehensive study by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner and the Joint Trauma System (JTS) concluded 87% (4016/4596) of U.S. combat fatalities (KIA) in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 to 2011 occurred prior to reaching a fixed medical treatment facility (MTF). Additionally, of the pre-MTF fatalities, a panel of military medical experts determined 24% (946/4016) were potentially preventable. Further, a recent study of combat casualties from the 75th Ranger Regiment, 2001 through 2010, documented that none of their pre-MTF fatalities and only 3% (1/32) of their total fatalities were potentially preventable.
3. In November 2012 my Command Surgeon and pre-hospital trauma experts from the JTS traveled to Afghanistan to survey pre-hospital medical teams from both the conventional and SOF perspective. Findings on the difference between the Ranger experience and DoD at large appear attributable to the Ranger Casualty Response System, which is a command-directed program that aggressively teaches the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) curriculum to all unit personnel, integrates TCCC into small unit tactics and battle drills, and uses a unit-based trauma registry for performance improvement and directed procurement. This system was in place prior to the onset of hostilities. It has undergone continuous updates throughout the current conflict via a unit-base trauma registry and by the expert recommendations from the Committee on TCCC. The unprecedented low incidence of preventable deaths achieved by the Ranger Casualty Response System may serve as a model for improving pre-hospital trauma care and saving lives on the battlefield.
4. My Command Surgeon and the JTS team will be contacting your staff personally to share more information about this promising program. I urge each of you to take their briefing outlining the importance of TCCC training for your combat troops, the criticality of command ownership of this process, and other aspects of this response system.

v/r

JAMES N. MATTIS
General, U.S. Marines

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