

*Charged with reinvigorating Operational Risk Management throughout the Navy and Marine Corps, the Commander of the Naval Safety Center has launched intensive efforts to improve ORM training, resources and assessment. In the following interview, Rear Admiral George Mayer offers an overview of risk management and how it relates to mishap prevention and mission readiness.*



### **How often do Sailors and Marines face risks?**

Our personnel constantly deal with risk, and not just because we are in the business of warfighting. Risk—resulting in losses, mishaps and waste—is a fact of modern life. We control most of those risks, but the mishap rates and mishap reports document the risks that aren't controlled. Preventable mishaps continue to kill more than 200 Sailors and Marines every year. Mishaps directly cost some \$800 million each year, and the indirect costs are several times that amount.

### **Are there other costs?**

Yes. Mishaps, both on and off the job, take away the tools of our trade. Losses from mishaps eat away at our ability to take the fight to our enemies. They steal from the fabric of our force and from our families. We need to fight against the causes of mishaps with the same energy we put into fighting our military enemies.

### **Is ORM just another safety program?**

No, it is an integral part of warfighting. To win in combat, we need to think, plan and perform better than our enemy. We need to understand the threats we face, the things that stand in the way of the successful accomplishment of our missions. We need to execute, sometimes under extreme stress, and we need to do it as a team. We prepare to go into battle by developing tactics and procedures to counter our adversaries. Then we hone the skill necessary to use those tactics and procedures.

### **The “O” in “ORM” used to stand for “Operational.” Has that changed?**

Since traffic wrecks remain the leading peacetime killer of military personnel, we've recognized that Sailors and Marines have to recognize and control risks while on liberty and at home. Whether a Sailor is lost on the flight deck or outside the gate, it reduces our readiness to the same extent. So the “O” now stands for both “Operational” and “Off-Duty.”

### **Can you sum up the purpose of ORM?**

ORM is a key tactic in our long-term war on mishaps. In this struggle, our enemy is, in most cases, ourselves and our own errors. The threat isn't “red” (the enemy). It is “blue”: ourselves, our habits, our sometimes limited knowledge and poor planning, and our acceptance of unnecessary risk. ORM teaches people how to recognize risk, evaluate it, control it and still get the job done. Looking at how we live and work in these terms, and making myriad smart decisions, we can achieve a mishap-free Navy and Marine Corps team.