

step they could possibly conceive to do something now to halt the upswing in accidents. Shortly thereafter, a proposal was set before me by the State Safety Committee for instantaneous adoption of the program for all State departments. This proposal I was more than ready and eager to accept and endorse wholeheartedly.

This, then, is the background, the reason for our gathering here today—a giant stride ahead in the attack on accidents in this State. This is your opportunity to take the instruction which you shall receive in this room over the next two days and go out and teach all others. Yours is an important message—as important as being able to arise and begin a new day tomorrow. Yours will be the responsibility to teach your fellow State employees how to detect “driver error” in other persons before they create a situation that will cause an accident that may result in death or injury to the innocent, unsuspecting motorist. It will be your duty to teach them to consider the existence of adverse conditions—weather, road, light, the other driver.

We are horrified when we hear of death and destruction in Viet Nam, and well we should be, but it is even more horrifying when I realize that for every American who has died in every war, battle or police action since 1900, there have been two persons killed on this nation’s highways. And this is in what we are proud to call the most enlightened nation in the world.

The effects of this course have been far-reaching, for there have been, since the inception of the training, more than 95,000 drivers who have received the benefits of this instruction. Only through the constant training and development of instructors, such as yourselves, will we ever be able to reach all of the licensed drivers in this country, and believe me that is our goal. The Maryland State Police soon realized that they would be unable to reach everyone through their instruction alone, so they immediately attacked the problem by developing instructors in service clubs across the State, having them certified as instructors and then having them arrange classes in their local areas. This same plan we expect you to follow. As soon as your qualification as an instructor is established, we expect you to return to your respective State departments and thoroughly indoctrinate your fellow employees with what you will learn here today and tomorrow.

In effect, then, I am today, here and now, declaring war, total war, on death and injury on our highways. As the chief executive of the State of Maryland, it is my sincerest wish that not one more life be taken foolishly, carelessly, thoughtlessly, recklessly, on this State’s highways, and I ask you to do everything within your power to bring about a fulfillment of that wish.