

# Commandant's Note

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In the crucible of ground combat, the Infantry Soldier stands as the ultimate instrument to achieve victory. The enduring mission of the Infantry — to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver to destroy or capture them, or to repel their assault by fire, close combat, and counterattack — rests squarely on the shoulders of these warriors. Fulfilling this responsibility requires more than just courage; it demands an unwavering commitment to excellence and the relentless pursuit of mastering fundamental infantry skills.

As this edition of *Infantry* is released, we are preparing to celebrate one of our most important events of the year — Infantry Week. In addition to our traditional events — Best Ranger, International Sniper, Lacerda Cup All-Army Combatives Championship, and Best Mortar Competitions — this year we will also host the inaugural Best Jumpmaster Competition to recognize excellence from within our Airborne community. These events provide opportunities for our service members to demonstrate expertise in these fundamentals as well as highlight their readiness, lethality, and resiliency. The Army's Soldiers are the world's best, and Infantry Week competitors exemplify the dedication, superior physical fitness, and mental fortitude that distinguish our fighting force.

The Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) is another vital way our Soldiers solidify and demonstrate proficiency in the core warrior skills essential for combat. As U.S. Army Infantry School CSM Christopher Donaldson states in our opening article, “few achievements carry as much professional meaning as the EIB.” The repetition of completing these basic tasks not only builds confidence but also reinforces the importance of standards and increases the collective lethality of our units. For more than 80 years, the EIB has served as the mark of a true Infantry professional, and to maintain this credibility, we periodically update requirements and tasks to account for the changing character of war. CSM Donaldson touches on these changes in his article, with more details to be released during Infantry Week. All Infantry Soldiers should aspire to earn their EIB as it represents the standard of excellence that keeps our force disciplined, proficient, and ready to fight and win on the hardest days of combat.

In this issue of our branch professional bulletin, I also wanted to specifically address the importance of our 11C Indirect Fire Infantrymen and upcoming changes that will not only improve the proficiency of our mortar Soldiers but enhance the lethality of our fighting formations. Indirect fires are a key component of combined arms maneuver, and

11Cs provide commanders with a powerful, versatile, and responsive asset — their value cannot be overstated.

In “The Transformation of Indirect Fire Infantryman Training Strategy,” SFC Jessie Lauritzen and SSG Charles Pfferrer discuss the extensive updates of Training Circular (TC) 3-20.33, *Training and Qualification of Mortars*. The publication, which was released last August, prescribes a more standardized training methodology, ensuring a consistent high standard across all mortar units. It also updates qualification requirements and includes drills and procedures for the latest generations of mortar systems. The authors note that the TC updates provide both opportunities and challenges, and leaders will need to engage with their Soldiers to ensure proper implementation as well as to share feedback to ensure it meets the needs of the force.

The subsequent article written by the command team of the Mortar Training Company here at Fort Benning, GA, introduces an exciting development — the creation of the Infantry Master Mortar Trainer Course. This new program of instruction will forge expert NCOs who will serve as a commander's resident subject matter expert on planning, resourcing, and validating mortar training. Having these master trainers will create a conduit between the foundations learned during formal schooling and the rapidly evolving environment of our operating force. IMMT graduates will be able to train and evaluate mortar crews, sections, and platoons; develop and assist in implementing the commander's mortar unit training program; and plan, resource, and execute mortar qualification. This initiative is more than just a new course; it represents a fundamental change in the Army's approach to developing and maintaining mortar proficiency where it's needed most. The authors succinctly note, “By empowering our best NCOs with the knowledge to build and execute world-class training, we are ensuring that our Infantry companies will always have the responsive fire support they need to close with and destroy the enemy.”

After reading through this issue, your feedback is essential. I also strongly encourage all Infantry Soldiers — officer and enlisted — to write and submit articles for our branch journal. Contact *Infantry* staff at [usarmy.benning.cac.mbx.infantry-magazine@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.benning.cac.mbx.infantry-magazine@army.mil) with your questions or ideas.

I am the Infantry! Follow me!

