

Commandant's Note

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Setting the Conditions

Our Army confronts a complex array of threats across multiple domains and multiple continents. Russia has learned from its interventions in Syria, Georgia, Ukraine, and it is prioritizing the synchronization of cyber, deception, and information operations to confuse and overwhelm its opponents. China is improving its anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) capabilities to create stand off by making it increasingly difficult for us to deploy maneuver forces throughout the Pacific Command (PACOM) theater. North Korea has a robust amount of artillery aimed at Seoul, along with special forces, NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) capabilities, and an expanding arsenal that could spark a highly lethal conflict. Iran continues to foment unrest across the Middle East, including support to various terrorist groups. And although ISIS has lost much of its self-declared caliphate, we continue to confront serious threats in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, North Africa, Horn of Africa, and beyond.

In short, we live in a dangerous and complicated world. In this period of protracted competition oriented against multiple adversaries, a major war could unfold with little to no notice. Army forces continue to be engaged in ongoing combat missions, as well as operations to deter adversaries and reassure our allies. How does the Infantry help set conditions to achieve our national objectives and win in the next fight?

The Infantry School is undertaking an array of efforts to do precisely that. Our top priority for the Infantry School is to produce Soldiers and leaders that can fight, win, and survive against any enemy in a multi-domain environment now and in the future. We will accomplish this through multiple initiatives.

First, with regard to leadership and education, we are reviewing all of our programs of instruction (POIs) across officer and NCO education systems and functional courses like Ranger School to ensure we are producing Infantry leaders who are prepared to fight and win against a near peer. We are also analyzing methods to ensure we produce the most skilled Infantryman to the force upon completion of One Station Unit Training (OSUT).

Regarding the Office of the Secretary of Defense Close Combat Study, we are providing the necessary input to ensure the Army garners additional resources to develop Infantry Soldiers and squads as platforms that are lethal, mentally and physically dominant, and that are trained in the basics to master any environment and can close with and destroy any threat.

The subterranean operating environment represents a near-term priority for the Maneuver Center of Excellence/ Infantry School. We are leading a synchronized effort for the Army for the development of doctrine, a rigorous training plan, and equipping solutions. This will help ensure our Infantry Soldiers and squads are ready to fight and win in this very complex environment.

Regarding the health of the Infantry branch as a whole, we acknowledge the multitude of manning requirements and demands on the force. We are seeking to meet these requirements for Infantry officers and NCOS while minimizing disruption to the force to the greatest extent possible and highlighting to the leadership how we are mitigating risk.

We are also ensuring continuity in key initiatives including marksmanship and the Russian New Generation Warfare (RNGW) study. The Infantry School Command Sergeant Major, CSM Martin Celestine, continues to advance the proposed marksmanship qualification table. We are also sending RNGW briefing teams to each of the divisions to ensure they fully understand the results of the study, and thereby better educating and preparing our Infantry Soldiers and leaders in the field for this threat.

Finally, the Infantry School is increasing our interaction with units that are forward deployed in sustained competition with potential adversaries. We are incorporating video teleconferences with deployed units into the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course (IBOLC) and Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) to discuss current conditions as well as to share the latest tactics, techniques, and procedures. We leverage our allied nation liaison officers to provide comprehensive briefings on current and future threats in their respective regions.

There is no magic elixir to guarantee success in a multi-domain environment — it will take leadership, training, education, and rigorous, holistic preparation for combat. The initiatives and efforts outlined above embody a few of the ways the Infantry School is tackling these challenges. The Infantry School's core mission — to produce Soldiers and leaders that can fight, win, and survive against any enemy — is more important now than ever. The Infantry School continues to make every effort to ensure we are prepared to succeed on the battlefields of tomorrow. I am confident the Infantry can and must prevail. The Infantry remains the close combat force for our nation, always ready to close with and destroy our enemies by fire and maneuver.

As always, we welcome and encourage your input and collaboration to make our branch even better.