

Commandant's Note



BG LARRY BURRIS

After highlighting Arctic operations in our Spring issue, in this edition of *Infantry*, we leap to the opposite end of the spectrum and head into the jungle. While the Army has an extensive history of conducting operations in this environment, the two decades of operations in the Middle East, as part of the Global War on Terrorism, drew our attention elsewhere. As the Army refocuses on near-peer challenges, the Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a key area of importance, and it is imperative the force continues to learn and master the fundamentals of jungle operations.

Throughout its 82-year existence, the 25th Infantry Division has spent most of its time operating in the challenging terrain and climate conditions typical of jungle environments. The Division continues to build on its reputation as the Army's premier jungle experts as it operates the branch's only Jungle School and carries out its mission to "deter adversaries by building, sustaining, and forward-posturing ready forces alongside allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility."

This edition opens with a foreword from the Tropic Lightning Division's Commanding General, MG Joseph Ryan, who provides an overview of the division's history and introduces the themes of our featured articles. These subsequent seven articles highlight division leaders' experiences and lessons learned from participating in numerous Operation 'Pathways' exercises, Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center rotations, and Jungle Operations Training Course (JOTC) iterations.

A key lesson is stated in one of the article's titles: "The Jungle Is Neutral." This environment shows no partiality, and its harsh conditions can frustrate and humble even the most seasoned Soldiers. The 12-day JOTC is an important tool to provide service members from across the force with the critical skills needed to survive and thrive in this environment. In his article on the critical role of JOTC, CPT Mac Lalor makes an excellent point that Infantry Soldiers are not the only ones who will benefit from attending the course. It is also imperative for leaders and non-combat arms Soldiers to receive the training as it will help them understand the risks and challenges of all activities they can or will face in the jungle.

One function that faces immense challenges in this environment is sustainment. CPT Wells Rugeley's article, "Prolonging Operational Reach in Contested Jungle Environments," discusses the need to adapt and modernize forward support companies in order to conduct successful tactical-level sustainment operations in the Indo-Pacific. He lists several recommended solutions to these challenges, which include fielding additional utility task vehicles, aerial resupply vehicles, modular fuel tanks, and water purification equipment.

Another of our featured articles, "IBCT Distributed Command and Control," discusses a series of command and control experiments the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team recently completed during four training events. The authors share four concepts that were either taught or reinforced during these events, including the importance of masking sight, heat signatures, electronic signals, and sound; focusing on employing the capability

not deploying the capability; expanding leaders' concept of the rear area; and constantly aligning the "sight picture" to ensure mission command principles maintain a clear sense of purpose.

As this will be my final Commandant's Note, I also want to take the time to thank all those who are assigned and support the U.S. Army Infantry School. Among these individuals are some of the most professional, determined, and passionate leaders I have had the privilege to learn from and grow alongside as a leader, friend, and mentor. I am proud to have served alongside the dedicated drill sergeants, instructors, staff, Department of the Army Civilians, and leaders who so expertly continue to mold the next generation of Infantry Soldiers, and I thank them for the vital impacts they continue to make every day towards building the most capable Infantry force possible.

In closing, Fort Moore is where tomorrow's Soldiers are born and trained, and where those returning are eager to hone-in that cutting edge for more. Being a small part of their journey — watching them grow into the leaders and teammates they will become within their career — is the most rewarding part within this seat. Helping others, just as I've been helped before, with letters of recommendation, problem solving, getting the correct POC on the line, are just a few of the most invaluable qualities this uniform has allowed me to pay forward. Remember that leadership is a gift, a gift given by those whom we lead, and this job is rooted in servitude. It has been a privilege to serve as an Infantryman in our Army for the last 28 years. I can think of no greater privilege that's provided me with lifelong friends, teammates, and memories. And for one final time, Bayonet 6, signing off.

I am the Infantry! Follow me!