



Commandant's Note

MAJOR GENERAL JOHN M. Le MOYNE Chief of Infantry

THE INTERIM BRIGADE COMBAT TEAMS—CLOSING THE GAP

Fellow Infantrymen: I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on a number of things going on here at Fort Benning to support the Army Transformation program. Things are moving at a fast pace as we follow up on insights gained during the Joint Contingency Force Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE), begin work on the Light Forces Modernization Plan to frame future Infantry modernization requirements, support the 4th Infantry Division Capstone Exercise (DCX), and continue our work with the Interim Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) leadership at Fort Lewis and the other proponent schools to finalize the design and operational concept of the IBCT. At the same time, we are continuing to instruct courses to our Infantry noncommissioned officers and officers, and we continually work to improve Infantry systems to enhance Infantry lethality, survivability, and mobility. We welcome your input and feedback as we move forward in these important endeavors. In this note, I'd like to take some time to update you on the new Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) at Fort Lewis.

As many of you know, the first BCT is the 1st Brigade, 2d Infantry Division, commanded by Colonel Steve Bailey. Currently, while the units wait to find out which of several candidate vehi-

cles will be selected for the brigade, they are training on loaner and surrogate vehicles from the U.S. and Canada. This loaner vehicle concept has enabled the brigade to get started on collective training, and they are well on its way to meeting its Initial Operational Capable (IOC) date of December 2001. The two Infantry battalions (1-23 INF and 5-20 INF) have already been converted to the new organization, and the third Infantry battalion will be organized and on the ground by this June. These battalions are built around strong Infantry platoons and squads, and each battalion will put more than 500 Infantry soldiers on the ground. The 1st BCT's armor battalion has also started transition. This battalion was redesignated as a Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition (RSTA) Squadron (1-14 CAV). When fully enabled, the RSTA Squadron will provide the brigade the enhanced situational awareness required to be successful on the battlefield. The other elements of the brigade are transitioning as well. The 2d BCT, the 1st Bde/25ID, has begun the process of turning in its old equipment. Organizationally, the transforming of these initial BCTs is well under way!

With input and help from many of you, we at the Infantry School remain committed to ensuring the

best possible transformation of the BCTs. Our Assistant Commandant, Brigadier General Paul Eaton, recently left Fort Benning to take Major General Dubik's position as Deputy TRADOC Commander for Transition in charge of the Brigade Coordination Cell, at Fort Lewis. With his recent field experience, both heavy and light, General Eaton is well equipped for this job and we look forward to working with his team at Fort Lewis as we move forward. He already has a broad foundation of what's needed for this transformation to be successful. In addition to our early work to develop the organization and operational concept for the BCT, we recently sent instructors and mobile training teams from all the major units on Fort Benning to Fort Lewis to work with the brigade leadership in the Tactical Leader's Course (TLC) and to assist in the brigade train up. NCOs from the Ranger Training Brigade and the 29th Infantry Regiment have instructed the Infantry battalion personnel in combatives, mortar, and sniper training. All these are skills essential to the BCT's ability to successfully accomplish the traditional Infantry mission of closing with and destroying the enemy.

While the work continues at Fort Lewis, training

and doctrine developers here at Fort Benning are hard at work updating the field manuals, mission training plans, and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for use at Fort Lewis to ensure that they reflect the current operational concepts and training requirements of the brigade. Along with the brigade leadership, our combat developers are fine-tuning the BCT TOE to ensure that it meets the requirements of the organization and operations documents that spell out the BCT capabilities and fighting concepts.

These are exciting times for the Infantry. By the time you read this, the Army leadership will have announced its decision concerning the vehicle selections for the BCT, and the final process of refining doctrine, TTPs, and organizational design for the initial BCTs will have begun. This is only the first step in achieving the Chief of Staff of the Army's vision to transform our Army into a more lethal, mobile capable force, but rest assured the Infantry remains at the cornerstone of our future Army. I encourage you to follow the progress of this effort as we move forward, and I look forward to hearing from you and sharing your insights.

FOLLOW ME!!

