

# Commandant's Note

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## SHARING INFORMATION TO WIN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

The contemporary operational environment (COE) is as uncertain as it is violent, and every bit as complex as any we have faced before. Our Soldiers and leaders have learned to operate and win in it, and they are sharing their lessons learned with us every day. Closing with and destroying an enemy who uses asymmetric means to fight is far from simple, but our adaptability is making a difference. Adaptability has been part of the American character since the earliest days of the Republic, and today it is an integral part of the training our warriors receive at the Infantry School. Adaptability and innovation go hand in hand, and Soldiers in combat quickly learn what works and what does not, just as they learn to recognize the patterns of the enemy and anticipate his next move. The tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) employed and refined in theater today are passed to our doctrine writers, system developers, and trainers and will positively affect how we prepare for future battles.

The professional education of Soldiers and leaders was already ingrained in our Army when Axis armies and their allies were still focused on fielding obedient masses directed by a cadre of leaders. When Lieutenant Colonel George Catlett Marshal was Assistant Commandant of the Infantry School in 1927-1932, American Army leaders were taught *how* to think, rather than *what* to think; that continues to this day. Professional education relies heavily upon reading, thinking, and reflecting, and we are systematically review and revise our list of recommended readings to ensure it provides the right menu for that education. The list includes books on counterinsurgency, cultural awareness, infantry operations, and leadership. The complete list will be published in *Infantry Magazine*, posted on our Web site, and the books made available in the Infantry School library and bookstore.

Another crucial skill required by the COE that requires a comprehensive, realistic training strategy is marksmanship. A Soldier and his weapon must be inseparable; it is his means of mission accomplishment and his survival. Today's Soldier is as well-trained in the use of his assigned weapon as at any time in our history. Marksmanship training is evolving to reflect the realities of the COE: fleeting targets, close-range engagements, ambushes, situations requiring split-second decisions, and a host of dilemmas that demand Soldiers' complete attention under all conditions. Today's Soldier learns reflexive firing techniques and battle drills that enable him to place accurate, killing fire from a battle-proven machine gun, rifle, pistol, or shotgun on an enemy.

Training will assume broader and more complex dimensions as the Maneuver Center of Excellence takes shape in the coming months and years. Our ties to the Armor Branch began in 1919 when Major

Dwight D. Eisenhower transferred tanks from Camp Colt, Pa., to Fort Benning. The Tank School came to Benning from Fort Meade, Md., in 1932 and remained here until it moved to Fort Knox, Ky., in 1940. Colonel George S. Patton Jr., arrived at Fort Benning in 1940, was promoted to Brigadier General, and later commanded the 2nd Armored Division here in 1941 prior to his deployment to command in North Africa. The Armor and the Infantry have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting in defense of our homeland, and they will soon be better able to train together as they prepare to meet future threats to our nation.

The Maneuver Center of Excellence will be one topic of discussion at this year's Infantry Warfighting Conference, a gathering of the foremost trainers, tacticians, and leaders of the United States Army. This unique exchange of information will bring together the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army; the Commanders of Forces Command, Training and Doctrine Command, and the Combined Arms Center; and the Chief of Armor to update conference attendees on their respective functional areas. Separate presentations will highlight the Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Infantry Brigade Combat Team, warfighting lessons learned, and combined arms leader development. Today, such gatherings of Army senior leadership are at best infrequent due to mission requirements and the costs involved, but the ideas shared and decisions made pay dividends for the future in terms of their enormous training and doctrinal benefits.

We are an Army at war, and winning it demands our total commitment to training and to making the most efficient use of all our assets in a time of constrained resources. Our deployed warriors are grappling with the enemy wherever he is found, and the military and civilian workforce at the Infantry Center and School share their commitment to winning the Global War on Terrorism. America and our fellow citizens deserve no less.

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