

# Commandant's Note

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## TRAINING TOMORROW'S INFANTRYMEN: TODAY'S WAR, TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

In recent Army Training and Leader Development guidance, the United States Army Chief of Staff, General George W. Casey, Jr., pointed out that we can expect the present era of persistent conflict to include elements of irregular warfare and asymmetric threats. Training the Army demands ingenuity, innovation, and an understanding of the operational environment in which our Soldiers will serve. The transformation underway in our Initial Entry Training (IET), the three-phase Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC), COE-related changes within the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), changes in the program of instruction (POI) and weapons of the U.S. Army Sniper School, and changes to the Ranger School POI all point to the realities of the contemporary operational environment (COE) and our determination to graduate Soldiers best suited to fight and win in that environment. In this Commandant's Note I want to discuss how the Infantry School is preparing to meet current and future contingencies.

Fort Benning and Fort Jackson have worked closely to transform all Initial Entry Training. The first goal of this is to shape the attitude, character, and behavior of each Soldier. The Soldier's Creed is the basis on which he gains a positive attitude toward himself and the Army; he modifies his behavior to meet Army task standards; and our Army's values, ethics, and discipline provide a foundation upon which to build his character. The IET transformation focuses on outcomes-based training in which Drill Sergeants mentor their new Soldiers as they develop their attitude, behaviors, and character within a positive training environment which stresses Army values. Additionally, all graduates of IET are certified as Combat Lifesavers, their advanced rifle marksmanship training includes close quarters marksmanship, and they have met a new combat qualification standard that focuses on COE situations. They have also received comprehensive training in combatives and cultural awareness and language instruction targeted on the COE. They have also operated as members of a fire team.

In describing leadership as the integrating element of combat power, GEN Casey highlighted the importance of adaptive, agile leaders, and noted that we need to think differently about how we develop those leaders. In this regard, the BOLC implemented in 2006 represents a major transformation in our officer education system. BOLC I consists of pre-commissioning training and education, BOLC II represents initial military training for officers, and BOLC III includes branch-specific technical and tactical training and education. An Army Accessions Command BOLC Conference in April 2008 defined six overall BOLC Outcomes: Values and Ethics, Leadership,

Officership, Personal Development, Technical Competence, and Tactical Competence. BOLC cadre mentor, train, and coach the junior officers while in training. But graduation from BOLC III is not the end of the process. Leaders at the officer's first unit of assignment will continue to mentor and guide the officer.



The U.S. Army Sniper course is expanding its instruction to prepare students for the modern battlefield. Direct input from deployed snipers, new instructor input on modern threats and techniques, and new survivability and lethality skills are all aimed at meeting the challenges of the COE. Students today receive six additional hours of urban training and learn to employ aerial imagery and UAV reconnaissance. The M110 Semi Automatic Sniper Weapon has replaced the M24 as the primary sniper rifle. Firing the same 7.62x51mm NATO round as the M24, the M110 lets sniper engage multiple or fleeting targets with greater speed and accuracy, and its enhanced night vision capability reminds our enemies that the U.S. Army continues to own the night.

The Ranger Training Brigade continues to aggressively incorporate the COE into training while stressing leadership fundamentals. During the Benning phase, students conduct intelligence-driven missions on IED cells against OPFOR in Middle Eastern garb and execute numerous insertions and extractions with rotary wing aircraft. In the mountain phase COE-related training includes further intel-driven missions, even more air assaults, and truck movements hit by IED strikes and ambushes in which students secure the vehicle, evacuate casualties, and engage the OPFOR. The Florida phase increases the level of realism, with urban operations training, student patrols out of combat outposts, the mission of targeting an insurgent leader, and students employing attack aviation and AC-130 gunships.

Future wars may be fought on different terrain and against other enemies. However, the lessons we are learning about cultural awareness, civil-military and combined arms operations, counterinsurgency, combat leadership techniques, airmobile operations, and countless other aspects of our profession prepare us to simultaneously execute offense, defense, stability and support operations as we prosecute the global war on terrorism.

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