

Commandant's Note

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KEEPING THE PRIORITIES STRAIGHT

The U.S. Army has come a long way since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and the Infantry has been the tip of the spear as we deployed to face a threat whose relentlessness and ingenuity bore little similarity to those of earlier adversaries. During the Cold War, the monolithic threat of the Soviet Union and her satellite states was considerable, but we understood their doctrine, capabilities, and likely courses of action. We understood their logistical capabilities and weaknesses, and knew they were bound by the same rules we followed regarding noncombatants, wounded, and prisoners of war. Today's enemy is different. Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and others show no such restraint. Launching rockets into Israel from civilian neighborhoods in Gaza will draw Israeli counter-fire, but Hamas persists in provoking this devastating response. We live in an increasingly uncertain world in which the possibility of uncontrolled weapons of mass destruction is moving from the realm of mere speculation into that of possibility, and now more than ever our Infantry will be a key player as America asserts her role as the leader of the free world. As instability threatens regimes in the Middle East, in former Soviet states, along the Pacific Rim, in North Africa, and in sub-Saharan Africa, the necessity of maintaining credible forces capable of rapid deployment in support of U.S. interests cannot be ignored, and this mission will require Infantry. In this Commandant's Note, I want to highlight a number of ongoing initiatives that the U.S. Army Infantry School (USAIS) is pursuing to ensure that in this time of constrained resources and increased commitments we can continue to field the world's best leaders and Infantry Soldiers.

The dismounted squad is the foundation of the Infantry force. The key to decisive victory lies in the hands of Infantry squads of tactically and technically proficient Soldiers and leaders of the cohesive, resilient teams that can seize and retain the initiative in every fight and under all conditions. The dismounted Infantry squad is the cutting edge as we train a force that will close with and destroy the enemy at the time and place of our choosing, and under the conditions that will give us the greatest advantage while we deny him anything close to a fair fight. We maintain that advantage by continually enhancing the capabilities of small units. One example of this is the Lethal Miniature Aerial Munition System (LMAMS) currently under development. A LMAMS-equipped unit will be able to immediately engage targets that are out of range of our current line-of-sight and indirect fire weapons on complex terrain and which may be otherwise limited by rules of engagement (RoE). The advantages offered by LMAMS include responsiveness, high lethality, reduced likelihood of fratricide, and less collateral risk to noncombatants. The Infantry squad's lethality will also be enhanced by the fielding of the M4A1 carbine featuring a new barrel assembly, auto trigger assembly, ambidextrous selector, bolt assembly, and other features which provide the automatic fire Soldiers need during fire and movement when suppressive

fires are most needed. The enemy we have faced in Iraq and Afghanistan has displayed extraordinary tenacity and innovation in his tactics and techniques, and organizations such as the ISIS elements rampaging across Iraq, Taliban, Hamas, Hezbollah, and others are why we need to maximize Soldiers' situational awareness, resilience, and survivability.

We must continue to enhance our reconnaissance and security (R&S) capability by improving R&S doctrine, organization, training, education, materiel improvements, and personnel policies.

The discipline and health of the force are paramount concerns today. Educating Soldiers about Army Values in all of our training is critically important to ensure that our Soldiers represent the American people in whose name we fight. Enforcing standards and discipline, developmental counseling, initiating efforts to reinforce unit cohesion, and offering sponsorship and mentoring all support building effective Infantry teams, squads, and platoons. The Army's values are those of our society, and young Americans bring with them many of those qualities when they join our ranks. However, they also sometimes come with defective attitudes that can destroy unit cohesion and morale. Sexual harassment and assault are realities of the civilian world, and have begun to manifest themselves in our armed services. Part of this is due to attitudes that developed during or after high school and were never corrected; this is a form of deviant behavior that we simply cannot tolerate. The Sexual Harassment Assault Response & Prevention (SHARP) initiative currently stressed at the Army's highest command levels is both a way forward for today and a hope for future healthier relations between the genders and value systems that the Army comprises. For many young Soldiers, the Army is their family now. They look to us for their moral azimuth, and we owe it to them to help them remain proud members of the honorable profession of arms.

Finally, the Army's Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program is a superb conditioning and bonding opportunity that will strengthen the resilience of our Soldiers, leaders, and family members by giving them the knowledge and tools they need to fully recognize and support the importance of the Army as a team in which everyone plays an important role. Few other professions demand as much from their members; military families cope with stress levels unimaginable to non-military family members, and children are some of the most seriously affected. The Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program can help. I encourage you to support it. We owe our Soldiers and Families no less.

One force, one fight! Follow me!

