

Commandant's Note

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Training to Standard Despite the Challenges

We all take justifiable pride in the manner in which our Army has responded to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to build and train our Infantry in support of our nation's worldwide commitment to our global allies and the sustainment of our shared responsibility to represent America's interests at home and abroad. Since 1 March 2020, the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) trained over 10,000 Soldiers, parachutists, officer candidates, Infantry officers, noncommissioned officers, and other students in a variety of professional military education and functional courses. The One Station Unit Training (OSUT) population numbered well over 8,000 Soldiers at outset of the COVID-19 outbreak and these units trained continuously, never halting the training of new Soldiers throughout the pandemic.

The Infantry School proactively implemented measures to ensure students' safety during training and even through their travel to their follow-on assignments. Our success can only be attributed to the unwavering commitment of leaders, instructors, cadre, and support personnel whose dedication to mission accomplishment kept them focused on the key training tasks required to sustain total Army readiness and lethality.

Lacking a vaccine, our healthcare workers across the country continue to do their best to treat both young and old infected with this virus. In addition to treatment strategies, measures such as travel restrictions, social distancing, personal hygiene measures, face masks and

Drill sergeants demonstrate the proper salute to trainees from the 30th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception) at Fort Benning, GA. The trainees practice social distancing and wear face protection in accordance to CDC guidelines.

Photos by Patrick A. Albright





Above left, a drill sergeant from the 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment wears a protective face mask during a One Station Unit Training graduation on 24 April 2020 at Kanell Field on Fort Benning. Above right, a sniper student dry fires his rifle during training at the U.S. Army Sniper Course. Soldiers practice safety while ensuring correct execution of the training.

coverings, restriction of personal and unit movement, proactive unit command information programs, and other measures have proven helpful. The MCoE approach to mitigating COVID-19 has been both systematic and comprehensive, drawing upon the elements and strategies that were effective in earlier pandemics and relied on shared information and collaboration, both internal to the Department of Defense and across federal and state agencies.

The Army's plan to deal with COVID-19 guides on an azimuth that is defined by one principle that epitomizes the profession of arms: discipline. Since March, the steady spread of COVID-19 has moved across American towns, cities, and states with little resistance. In the locales where our country saw the greatest successes — as defined by lower infection and death rates — health professionals' guidance including social distancing, personal sanitation, wearing of face masks, restriction of movements, and other prudent guidelines were more scrupulously followed. Central to our continued training in the context of a pandemic is our emphasis on individual discipline. Adhering to the standards of personal conduct to keep yourself and those around you safe remains essential to all that we do. This should also be intuitive to Soldiers, who consistently maintain the highest standards of discipline to maintain combat effectiveness and ensure safety every day.

The Infantry School continues to sustain training on all of our mission essential courses. Some of our courses deferred at the height of the pandemic will resume, but we cannot ignore the possibility of a resurgence of COVID-19



A Soldier begins the slide for life on the first day of the Benning Phase of Ranger School as a Ranger instructor monitors his process.

in the fall. Readiness and lethality remain our watchwords. We will continue to train Soldiers and leaders to be ready to close with and destroy the enemy when called.

I am the Infantry! Follow me!