

## COVID-19 -- Around the Army (Mar 21 update)

By Army Public Affairs Staff 21 March 2020



### COVID-19 Hot Topics, updated March 21 --

1. Recruiting
2. U.S. Army North
3. Combat Training Centers
4. New Recruits Shipping to Basic Training
5. Fort Bliss Quarantines
6. Army Corps of Engineers

#### 1. Recruiting

*"We are very confident in our ability to operate in the virtual space, as it has become a primary method of talking to potential Soldiers in recent years. While face-to-face discussions are valuable when discussing options to serve in the U.S. Army, we are able to work around that, if necessary. Right now, I think that is necessary for the health and safety of our force and those around them. -- Maj. Gen. Frank Muth, USAREC commanding general*

The U.S. Army Recruiting Command continues to place the health and safety of our personnel and their families as our highest priority. To preserve force health protection, we are taking proactive steps to remind

our personnel to adhere to the guidance outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and the Defense Health Agency to help mitigate the spreading of illnesses like coronavirus disease. Our team will continue to closely monitor any developments that may impact our personnel and mission

- As of March 18, all recruiting stations within U.S. Army Recruiting Command are shifting to mobile and virtual operations with the public to limit in-person contact.
- Recruiters will remain accessible to those interested in a career with the U.S. Army, but they will communicate through text, phone calls, direct messages or video chat rather than face-to-face.
- Recruiters will have limited in-person contact with their Future Soldiers who are preparing to ship to training bases.
- All Future Soldiers are asked to stay in contact with their recruiters for regular updates regarding the status of their ship dates.

**Q: What happens to the students at the Recruiting and Retention College?**

A: Under the current guidance, the students currently at Fort Knox will complete their coursework and return to their duty stations as planned. The last of the courses currently in session is scheduled for graduation April 24. Additionally, USAREC is stopping movement of all new students to the Recruiting and Retention College effective immediately, based on guidance issued March 13 by the Department of Defense to restrict domestic travel in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

**Q: What is happening with Soldiers in the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program?**

A: Based on the guidance from the Department of Defense to stop movement of all Soldiers, anyone currently serving with a recruiting station as part of the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program will remain in place and part of the program until further notice. This will extend these Soldiers beyond the regulatory 14 days.

**Q: Will coronavirus disease have an impact on the recruiting mission?**

A: USAREC staff is monitoring the spread of COVID-19. Recruiting events and activities have been cancelled across the nation, which is impacting how we communicate about Army career opportunities. However, our recruiters are actively focusing on the virtual space to continue to connect with individuals who are interested in serving. We are using our mission modeling system to analyze the potential impacts on leads, but at this point

it's too early to know for sure.

**Q: What precautions is USAREC taking to ensure recruiters are practicing appropriate social distancing?**

A: As of March 18, all recruiting stations within U.S. Army Recruiting Command are shifting to mobile and virtual operations to limit in-person contact. Recruiters will remain accessible to those interested in a career with the U.S. Army, but they will communicate through text, phone calls, direct messages or video chat rather than face-to-face. Recruiters will have limited in-person contact with their Future Soldiers who are preparing to ship.

**Q: How are you ensuring you aren't sending sick Future Soldiers to training?**

A: As a precautionary measure, Army recruiting is prescreening all Future Soldiers who are within 15 days of shipping to basic training. Future Soldiers who are at increased risk or have symptoms are directed to contact a medical provider to be evaluated and then must be cleared by the Military Entrance Processing Station before shipping. This could result in a delay in shipping to the training base – the length of the delay will depend on how long it takes the individual to be free of any symptoms and ensure she/he does not have coronavirus disease as well as training seat availability. Future Soldiers who are not at increased risk and are symptom-free will ship to basic training as scheduled. Future Soldiers receive another round of screening upon arrival to the training base.

**2. U. S. Army North**

*“Even as Army North conducts its primary mission of homeland defense, when requested, our forces are prepared to deploy at the speed of need to provide Defense Support of Civil Authorities for disaster or emergency response.”*

- U.S. Northern Command, upon an approved request from the Federal Agency for Emergency Management, has activated Defense Coordinating Officers, Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers and Joint Regional Medical Plans and Operations officers to assist FEMA regions in planning and coordinating the use of DoD assets throughout the United States.
- U.S. Army North, led by Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson and headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas, is U.S. Northern Command's theater Army and, when designated, serves as the Joint Forces Land Component Command for all federal ground troops in the continental United States for Homeland

- ARNORTH is NORTHCOM's designated lead component to work with FEMA to align federal military support to validated requests for assistance.

U.S. Army North has activated its ten Defense Coordinating Officers/Elements in response to a request from FEMA. These specialized 10-person planning cells, led by senior Army colonels, are co-located with the FEMA regional headquarters and serve as the Secretary of Defense's liaison to coordinate requests for federal military assistance from the federal and state governments.

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- These specialized 10-person planning cells, led by senior Army colonels, are co-located with the FEMA regional headquarters and serve as the Secretary of Defense's liaison to coordinate requests for federal military assistance from the federal and state governments.
- Army North has also activated approximately 60 Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers, who are specially trained and experienced Army Reserve officers who assist the Defense Coordinating Officers in all U.S. states and territories.
- The DCO and EPLO network ensures that U.S. Northern Command, through Army North, is able to help federal, state, local, tribal and territorial leaders understand the unique military capabilities of the Defense Department and what type of military support may be appropriate and best suited for civil-assistance missions.

### **3. Combat Training Centers**

- **Out of an abundance of caution, the Army is adjusting Combat Training Center rotations to protect our Soldiers, allied partners and Army civilians participating in these training events in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.**
- **Soldiers from the Washington Army National Guard's 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team are now available to the governor of Washington State to provide support.**
- **Protecting the health and safety of our Soldiers and their families will remain the Army's top priority as we continue to reevaluate the situation as conditions change.**

**Q. How is the Army going to meet training requirements by adjusting CTC training?**

**A. Protection of the health and safety of our Soldiers and their families will remain the Army's top priority. We will continue to reevaluate the situation as conditions change.**

**Q. Are the CTC rotations being pushed back by a few weeks, or is it months?**

**A. At this time, it is undetermined but we will continue to monitor the effects of COVID-19 and adjust as conditions change.**

**Q. What does "adjust" mean in this context? Could you provide some additional timing details?**

**A. We are looking at the training calendar and making adjustments. This will have more of an impact to the 81st Stryker Brigade Combat Team and the Washington Army National Guard due to their location.**

**4. New Recruits Shipping to Basic Training - The Army will maintain overall readiness and health of the force and do the right thing, the right way.**

- We continue to ship recruits to basic combat training.
- We are following protocols to ensure recruit safety.
- We will adjust the flow of recruits shipping to BCT based off of conditions.
  
- TRADOC cleared 1,200 recruits to proceed to basic training after being put on standby.
- Recruits are screened for COVID-19 at one of the 65 military entrance processing stations (MEPS).
- Recruits are moved by commercial travel then undergo a second round of screening upon arrival at one of the four Army training centers: Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; and Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
  
- America sends us their sons and daughters it is our responsibility to care for them.
  
- The U.S. Army is always there for our Nation and we are continuing to hire.
  
- No decisions have been made but we are exploring all options – hire you now...ship later; bonuses; condensed training

**Q1: What is the status of new recruits scheduled to travel to Basic Combat**

**Training (BCT)?**

**A1: New recruits are moving to Basic Combat Training (BCT). The recruit screening procedure implemented on March 2nd continues to be in effect. Incoming recruits will be asked health/recent travel questions and their temperature will be taken at MEPS. Upon arrival to Reception Battalion at BCT, the process will be repeated, before training begins.**

**Q2: Will recruits be tested for the Coronavirus?**

**A2: Only those new recruits who meet the screening criteria during any part of their accession into the Army will be tested before reporting to training.**

**Q3: What is the status of Soldiers completing basic training and scheduled to attend Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at other geographical locations?**

**A3: BCT graduates will continue to the AIT locations as scheduled. The Army is developing a movement plan to ensure the safe transport of Soldiers to training and the mitigation of possible exposure to COVID-19. TRADOC is dedicated to meeting critical mission requirements while safeguarding the health and wellness of recruiters, recruits, cadre and their families.**

**Q4: What will happen to Soldiers completing AIT who are scheduled to report to their first duty station?**

**A4: Active duty Soldiers scheduled to report to their duty station after completion of AIT will await further guidance from their chain of commands regarding travel at this time. Guard and Reserve Soldiers will return back to their respective units.**

**Q5: Has there been any additional changes made at your four BCT in light of the Presidential guidance of gatherings of less than 10 people?**

**A5: Leaders have implemented force protection measures across all U.S. Army training centers to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19. TRADOC is dedicated to meeting critical mission requirements while safeguarding the health and wellness of recruiters, recruits, cadre and their families.**

**5. Fort Bliss Quarantines – for redeploying servicemembers from overseas**

***“The health and safety of our service members is our top priority. We’re aware of concerns regarding quarantine conditions. We take these concerns seriously and are looking into them. The quarantine site is new for all service members who are redeploying from***

***overseas and we continue to build capacity at each site on Fort Bliss.” -- Fort Bliss statement***

- **Quarantine, isolation, and conditional release are types of restriction of movement that can be imposed in certain circumstances by a military commander for individuals within the scope of the commander’s authority – such as unit returning from overseas duties.**
- **Quarantine or isolation will be accomplished through the least restrictive means available, consistent with protection of public health.**
- **Places of quarantine are maintained in a safe and hygienic manner, designed to minimize transmission of infection or contamination or other harm to other persons under quarantine. Adequate food, clothing, medical care, and other necessities will be provided.**
- **At Fort Bliss, the chain of command visited the current quarantine barracks Tuesday and spent time with the battalion’s chain of command and Soldiers to address concerns voiced by quarantined Soldiers.**
- **The three barracks currently house approximately 400 Soldiers (capacity is about 600). Each room is 17' x 15' and houses four Soldiers. These four Soldiers share a common area with a kitchenette and a bathroom with four Soldiers in an adjoining room. Each floor has washers and dryers.**
- **We will continue to improve operations, adding access to Wi-Fi, AAFES products, workout equipment, and laundry service. Starting today, AAFES will have a truck available to quarantined Soldiers so they can have access to other things they might want.**
- **A wide range of professionals are working hard to bring this situation to a resolution that supports your health and the safety of the Soldiers and the general public.**

**6. Corps of Engineers -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is prepared to assist the nation in a time of crisis to the very best of its capabilities, and we are postured to lean forward when an official request is received through the Department of Support for Civil Authorities (DSCA).**

- **Army Health Force Protection is our top priority.**
- **During emergencies, USACE is the federal government's lead public works and engineering support agency.**
- **Part of the unified national response to emergencies, USACE deploys hundreds of people to provide technical engineering expertise and promote capacity development at home and abroad.**
- **USACE provides technical assistance to non-Department of Defense federal agencies, state and local governments, Tribal nations, private U.S. firms, international organizations, and foreign governments through its international and interagency support mission.**

- USACE provides management and technical services to include: management and oversight in design, engineering and construction; environmental restoration and management services; research and development assistance.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers met with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

**Q1. Has USACE received a temporary medical facilities construction mission?**

**A1. At this time, USACE has not been given a COVID-19 support mission. We have not been assigned a mission to convert existing facilities into temporary medical facilities.**

**Q2. Has USACE begun planning for a temporary medical facilities construction mission?**

**A2. As a precautionary measure, USACE has begun assessing our capabilities in this area in conjunction with our partners. However, at this time, we have not been assigned a mission.**

**Q3. How long would the mission take and what would it cost?**

**A3. Since we have not been assigned a mission to construct temporary medical facilities and/or convert existing facilities into medical facilities, we do not have mission specific requirements and therefore have not made a determination yet as to the length or the cost of such a mission.**

**Q4. Does USACE have the capability to execute construction of temporary medical facilities?**

**A4. USACE does have the capability and experience in medical facilities construction. USACE works very closely with its stakeholders and partners on all missions to ensure that projects executed meet mission requirements. At this time, however, USACE has not been given a COVID-19 support mission.**