



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ARMY RESERVE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20310-2400

DAAR-ZA

3 APRIL 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR America's Army Reserve

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update: Soldier Virtual Battle Assembly Policy

1. On Friday, 27 March 2020, I directed our Headquarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina to release my recent "video" message updating you on three aspects of our COVID-19 response:

a. A reminder on your personal responsibility as a Soldier to maintain standards and discipline in "social distancing", frequent handwashing, keeping hands away from your face, etc., and remembering that you must see yourself not only as a potential victim of, but also as a potential vector (carrier) for, the virus;

b. Our policy, as of 23 March 2020, regarding "Soldier Virtual Battle Assembly" (SVBA);

c. A current operational update on what America's Army Reserve is doing to support the Army, USNORTHCOM, and the nation during this time of National Emergency.

2. I write this memorandum to give extra context and guidance regarding our policy on SVBA in order to ensure that there is no misunderstanding down the chain-of-command as to my intent in the execution of this critically important concept.

3. **Commander's Intent.** My intent, as I state in the video message, is to ensure that every Soldier -- and every Family member -- in this Squad embraces America's Army Reserve as a source of strength, stability and security in his or her life, and not as a source of additional stress during these challenging times. To that end, it is also my intent that every Soldier who would be otherwise able to attend and contribute to a traditional Battle Assembly (MUTA 4) be given credit for attendance (and pay) to the extent that the Soldier continues to develop his/her personal readiness, resilience, and development as a member of America's Army Reserve.

4. **Concept of the Operation.** Commanders should give Soldiers credit for their Individual Soldier readiness, resilience and self-development operations during the course of the month including physical and virtual/online activities that further that effect; it may also be executed through the liberal application of a rescheduled training (RST) policy that captures work executed in March 2020 and in the coming months. Soldiers will be paid accordingly through a chain-of-command that maintains monthly accountability of the Individual Soldier's status, but does not over-bureaucratize the process or place unnecessary requirements on Soldiers.

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a. This is about leadership. We must leverage the tenets of mission command. Commanders-at-echelon will have broad discretion to operate within my intent and to maximize the opportunity for their Soldiers to conduct readiness sustainment and proficiency development operations in an individually dispersed environment. Keep in mind that the aggregation of Soldiers increases risk to this force and our fellow citizens.

b. We operate at the speed of trust, empowering the chain-of-command to maintain continuous accountability of the force, while presuming -- as a first principle -- that the vast majority of our Soldiers can be counted upon to do the right thing, the right way, and to conduct themselves within the spirit of my intent. We will hold each other and ourselves accountable, and manage any exceptions to the presumption of the professionalism and integrity of this Squad as appropriate.

c. Commanders will validate unit accountability/SVBA data for pay monthly by ensuring that leaders continue to maintain contact with their subordinate units and Soldiers in whatever fashion and with whatever means they deem viable.

d. Commanders and leaders will leverage this concept as a means to develop new techniques, tactics and procedures (TTPs) to exploit, refine and improve the Double Eagle Application (DE App) as a tool to facilitate distributed communications, command and control, Soldier and unit competitions, Individual Soldier development opportunities, etc., and to capture "best practices" for exploitation as we press to improve that capability. I encourage Commanders and leaders to be agile and flexible as you explore virtual capabilities, decentralized or small group training options, and find ways to motivate and train our Soldiers.

5. These are stressful times for the Nation and all of humanity, and the enormity of our challenge is not easily overstated. Still, I count on each of you to remember who you are: you are a Warrior and a member of a Team. You Serve the people of the United States and you live the Army Values. As we press on into tomorrow, in communities across the globe, continue to be the model of what right looks like and never walk past a mistake. Take care of your Squad at whatever level you are leading, and build trusting teams wherever you go.

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Pending:*

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