



Colonel John Joe Peña

Commandant, Medical Training and Education Campus (METC)

Colonel (COL) J. Joe Peña hails from Brownsville, Texas and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Chemical Corps from the University of Texas at Brownsville in 1998 where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. He is a licensed physician assistant, instructor, strategist, and an executive manager with an exemplary record of medical program management, and medical capability management and development. COL Peña is trained in critical care medicine, and his expertise is sought for enroute combat casualty care operations. He provided input on policy at the highest levels of the U.S. government, is joint duty assignment qualified, and supported special operation forces operating in multiple geographic regions. He spent a career focused on operational/austere medicine and preparing for and responding to crisis and other challenging conditions around the world.

COL Peña earned a Master of Public Health from the University of West Florida, a Master of Science in International Relations from Troy University, and Master of Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Nebraska. He is a graduate of the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation Command and General Staff College; completed the RAND Arroyo Center Fellowship, Santa Monica, CA; the Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) Strategic Broadening Seminar at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and the U.S. Army War College.

COL Peña has served in a variety of roles and leadership positions – Smoke-Decontamination (Decon) Chemical Platoon Leader; Company Executive Officer; Battalion Surgeon; Brigade Surgeon; Clinic Officer-in-Charge; Medical Advisor to the Commander, Kandahar Airfield; Medical Advisor for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army – Review Boards; Chief, Aeromedical Physiology; Deputy Surgeon and Crisis Action Planner, Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa; Director, Academics and Training Division; Chair, Army Medical Specialist Corps Security Cooperation Global Health Engagement (SC/GHE) Advisory Committee; appointed as an Associate Professor, Department of Military Emergency Medicine, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute Instructor/facilitator, Joint Medical Operations Course; Deputy Director for the Department of Aviation Medicine; Capability Manager for Army Health Systems (Treatment), and currently serves as the Commandant, Medical Education and Training Campus (METC).

Previous deployment experience supporting conventional and special operations forces includes Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) January 2005 to January 2006 and March 2007 to May 2008; Operation Unified Response (OUR) January 2010 to March 2010; Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) March 2011 to March 2012; and to Camp Lemonier, Djibouti in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) September 2018 to October 2019.

His awards and decorations include: Bronze Star (1OLC); Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal (3OLC); Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal (3OLC), Army Achievement Medal (5OLC); as well as the Combat Medical Badge, Flight Surgeon Badge, Air Assault Badge, Navy Diving Medical Officer Badge, Senior Army Instructor Badge, Army Basic Space Badge, the Army Staff Identification Badge, and German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (Gold). He was awarded the AMEDD 9A proficiency designator and inducted into the Order of Military Medical Merit in 2019.