

# Thunderbolt Blast

Monthly Armor School Newsletter  
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## Armor School Soldiers

**194<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED BRIGADE: MULTIMEDIA KIOSKS.** At the Maneuver Center of Excellence, Armor crewmen and scouts train on Skill Level 10 tasks that enable their success at their gaining units. To support continual learning, multimedia kiosks are now placed inside each platoon barracks for Soldiers in training. The kiosks afford Soldiers the opportunity to prepare for upcoming training events, review past training events or expand their knowledge on various topics using locally produced media. Also, the kiosk system enhances drill sergeant contact time and Soldier personal time, providing supplemental media developed for use in conjunction with scheduled POI subject matter. The 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade cadre creates and manages the kiosks' training material. To produce training videos, NCOs draft a story board on the desired topic that directly supports end-of-cycle training objectives. Next, cadre write a script, then film and edit the video. Once complete, the video is uploaded to the kiosks, where Soldiers can instantly access the material via a touch-screen interface. Kiosk training material includes topics like the conduct of PRT, loading and unloading the 120mm tank round, the four fundamentals of BRM, PMCS of the M4 and land navigation. The training videos and kiosk program seek to support the 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade's training mission by developing a continuous learning environment for Soldiers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. If you have any suggestions or ideas that would improve the kiosk system, please call or email MAJ Josh Brown, (706) 505-6074 or [josh.w.brown2.mil@mail.mil](mailto:josh.w.brown2.mil@mail.mil).

**316<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY BRIGADE: REORGANIZATION.** The brigade is excited about and prepared for the upcoming MCoE reorganization. The brigade will become the functional brigade at Fort Benning. At endstate, the brigade will still have 1-16 Cavalry Squadron that will continue to provide world-class support to ABOLC, ARC, Master Gunner Courses and the MCoE. The brigade will also gain an infantry battalion, including an EXFOR company that will be at the tip of the spear as it tests new equipment and concepts for our Army of the future. This battalion will include a company in support of ABCT, Bradley and Abrams Master Gunner, and Bradley Leader courses. Another company will support SBCT, Stryker Leader, MGS Master Gunner and the crewman courses. Also, the infantry battalion will have a special-skills company, including the Sniper, Heavy Weapons Leader and Combatives courses. Rounding out the brigade will be a squadron focused on reconnaissance, including the Army Reconnaissance, Cavalry Leader, and Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course, along with several other functional courses. Please send comments to MAJ Roy Bolar, (706) 626-8206 or [roy.i.bolar.mil@mail.mil](mailto:roy.i.bolar.mil@mail.mil).

## Armor Branch and OCOA Personnel Notes

**PROJECT WARRIOR PROGRAM.** The Project Warrior Program recognizes and leverages the demonstrated performance and potential of outstanding officers and noncommissioned officers. Following completion of key developmental positions, participants conduct a rotation as an observer-coach-trainer at a combat training center, followed by assignment as a small-group instructor/leader at a TRADOC center of excellence/school. Critical for promotion and selection boards, leaders must ensure NCOERs properly recognize selection for the program. A recommended senior rater bullet is "selected over peers for the Project Warrior Program." SOP for NCO participation in the Project Warrior Program is available on the OCOA Website, <http://www.benning.army.mil/Armor/OCOA/>.

**EIA TCCT/SCCT.** Excellence In Armor (EIA) is a unit-level program, conducted using baseline requirements established by the U.S. Army Armor School. As of now, the program's Tank Commander Certification Test/Scout Commander Certification Test (TCCT/SCCT) has been suspended. The Office Chief of Armor (OCOA) is in the process of updating the EIA Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) to reflect this change. A new system is also in development to replace the current test. For questions or concerns, contact OCOA at email [usarmy.benning.mcoe.mbx.armor-ocoa@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.benning.mcoe.mbx.armor-ocoa@mail.mil).

## From the Chief of Armor's Turret

### Developing A Culture of Readiness for the Mounted Force in the Army of Preparation

"Today, the U.S. Army stands at a historical inflection point. After fighting two major wars over the last 12 years, the Army has learned much about the dramatically changing world and the way it approaches conflict. The Army must now review these hard-won lessons, but with an eye toward an increasingly complex and dangerous future. In essence, the Army must begin the transition from an *Army of Execution* to an *Army of Preparation*."

*Stand To*, 30 May 2013

As the Army shifts from a period of persistent combat, we must create **a culture of readiness** that ensures we are prepared to answer the nation's call anytime, anywhere.

Armored forces bring unique capabilities of tactical mobility, protection and discriminate precision firepower that empower the operating force's core competencies of wide area security and combined arms maneuver. The combination of the tactical mobility, protection, and firepower of armored forces, when placed in concert with strategic mobility of light and medium forces, provide the critical components of highly capable, flexible combined arms teams. Armored forces are central to deterring aggression **and** winning conflicts when deterrence fails. The role of armored forces—equipped with tanks, fighting vehicles, and armored personnel carriers—is growing increasingly unique. In fact, in many regions of the world, our allies do not possess the necessary depth of capability and will increasingly rely on the U.S. Army's readiness and flexibility to fill gaps that ensure regional security, provide deterrence, and employ lethal combat power to defeat our nation's enemies. Because of these unique requirements, we must ensure we are ready and our skills are razor sharp when a combatant commander's requirements demand



**2013 FREDERICK M. FRANKS AWARD.** The suspense to submit nominations for the 2013 Frederick M. Franks Award is extended through 31 July 2013. This prestigious award will be presented to an Active or Reserve Component officer, warrant officer, NCO or a Department of the Army civilian, regardless of branch or occupational specialty. Consideration will be given to the nominee's long-term contributions to the ground-fighting and warfighting capabilities of the U.S. Army and the transformation of the mounted force to fight and win in unified land operations. The selected individual will be presented the award during the Maneuver Conference in September 2013. For more information, visit <http://www.benning.army.mil/Armor/OCOA/>.

**BRIGADE/BATTALION CSL BOARDS.** One significant difference between previous brigade/battalion CSL selection boards and the FY15 brigade/battalion CSL board is the "opt-in" concept. For future CSL boards, officers who elect to compete for command ("opt-in") will compete and be considered for every command category for which they are eligible (based on branch, regardless of the type of command or location). Future CSL boards will render one score for each officer based on overall leadership potential. Commanders will be selected from a single order-of-merit list and slated according to their relative ranking, Army requirements and the officer's preferences. Officers get a vote; they may choose to compete ("opt-in") or not compete ("opt-out"). If officers choose to compete, they will prioritize the subcategories of commands for which they are eligible. The officer's preferences will inform the selection process, but the officer's overall ranking and Army requirements will be the overriding factors. Officers who choose to complete and then subsequently decline after selection limit their potential for increased responsibility. An entry will be made on the Officer Record Brief (ORB) indicating the decision to decline after electing to compete. Declination will make the officer ineligible to compete for either LTC or COL CSL billets in the future. Finally, the CSL eligibility window will be reduced from four years to three years for COLs and LTCs. For COLs, the change ensures those officers selected have an opportunity to serve in critical post-command billets before their mandatory retirement dates. For LTCs, the change eliminates the overlap of a LTC's command tour with their primary-zone COL promotion board. We acknowledge that this is quite different from the process we have seen over the years. Please feel free to call Armor Branch if you have any questions.

**BROADENING ASSIGNMENTS.** Senior noncommissioned officers are encouraged to volunteer for demanding and unique broadening assignments. Some of these assignments include, but are not limited to, inspector general, equal-opportunity adviser, tactical NCO and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Along with being some of the most demanding and unique assignments, they are the most sought after. As a result, Soldiers need to be aware of the limited number of authorizations for these types of assignments. Currently, only 1 percent of the senior Armor NCOs can fill these assignments, and with the reduced number of authorizations, it makes the selection process very competitive among peers. All the prerequisites for these assignments are established by AR 614-200 in conjunction with more guidance from Human Resources Command.

The following points are some of the most common factors that make Soldiers ineligible or hinder their ability for assignment consideration: outdated rank and decorations on DA photo; failing to articulate performance potential on last five NCOERs; any UCMJ within the last five years; GT scores below 110; outdated ERB; expired/non-existent security clearance; failing HT/WT; low or failing AFPT standards; failing the background investigation.

Armor Branch wants to encourage you to address these issues as soon as possible to facilitate your selection for broadening assignments. The selection for promotion to the next higher grade has become more demanding and competitive; broadening assignments and branch-qualifying positions are very important to the senior NCO's professional development.

## Capability Managers Updates

**DIGITAL VS. PRINTED DOCTRINE.** Many NCOs have said that they maintain doctrinal references on personal smartphones and iPads but would not have personal devices in the box due to the dusty climate. There is no common way for leaders to refer to doctrinal references digitally when conducting training in a field environment. TCM-ABCT was told that garrison platoon offices have limited network capability for all leaders to refer to digital doctrine to prepare training and lack enough printers to provide all leaders production capabilities. We recommend that all echelons maintain printed libraries in garrison and transport appropriate references for assessments during training. The Army Publishing Directorate (APD) has doctrine that can be printed or ordered in hard copy. Units can create publications accounts through the APD at <http://www.apd.army.mil/>. Once on the APD portal, navigate to the "order subscriptions" page and then to "category browse." On the left column, references can be browsed. If an item has an EA (unit issue) code, the publication can be ordered in hard copy. If the item has an EMO (electronic media only) code, the reference needs to be printed by the unit. One example: ATTP 3-21.71, **Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad (Bradley)**, is listed as EA, so the manual can be ordered through an APD unit-publications account vs. units being required to print this reference.

## Doctrine

**DOCTRINE DIALOGUE.** The Doctrine and Collective Training Division (DCTD) of the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) would like to thank the leaders and Soldiers of the armored force for your continued support as we develop doctrinal publications. It is through your efforts that maneuver doctrine remains relevant, accurate and timely. With your assistance we shall continue to develop maneuver doctrine for brigade combat team (BCT) and below, providing the right information in the right manuals for the appropriate echelon of maneuver organizations. We are currently developing Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-20.71, **The Mechanized Infantry Platoon**, and ATP 3-90.5, **The Combined Arms Battalion**. We look forward to the dialogue these developing manuals will generate. We encourage leaders and Soldiers to check our Website often, as you will find approved doctrine applicable to armored formations as well as publications being staffed as part of the development phase. Your ABCT doctrine Webpage can be accessed at <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/abct-doctrine>. Your ABCT doctrine representatives are LTC Stephon Calhoun, [stephon.calhoun@mail.mil](mailto:stephon.calhoun@mail.mil), (706) 545-3981, and Bruce Moore, [bruce.m.moore2.civ@mail.mil](mailto:bruce.m.moore2.civ@mail.mil), (706) 545-7162.

adaptive professional expertise in tactical ground mobility, mobile protected firepower, reconnaissance and security to defeat a wide array of enemy forces and establishing wide area security across the full range of military operations.

Here at the MCoE, we are taking active measures to develop a culture of readiness and provide better trained and ready Armor and Cavalrymen to the operational force. To achieve this critical goal, the MCoE is realigning its training brigades to create an organization designed around functional roles. As part of this functional realignment, The MCoE is consolidating all reconnaissance and security training (Army Reconnaissance Course, the Cavalry Leader's Course, and the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader's Course) and the master gunner courses (Bradley, Abrams, and Stryker Mobile Gun System) under the 316<sup>th</sup> CAV Brigade. The realignment seeks to streamline training systems, increase unity of effort, and support future expansions of our programs in order to increase the combat effectiveness of the Army's maneuver forces.

Additionally, we are moving forward with the 6 x 36 Scout Platoon construct in all of our BCT's (9 HMMWVs and 36 personnel for the IBCT). Mr. George Desario, our Office of the Chief of Armor director, just visited 1/1 CD out at Fort Hood to discuss the details of a 6 x 36 initiative for the next Decisive Action Training Event NTC rotation in 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR FY 14. 1/1CD will convert their scout platoons to 6 vehicles x 36 Troopers and will have the Troop XO on a combat platform. This initiative will allow us to fully assess the 6 x 36 concept for the Army. We believe the 36 man Scout Platoon will bring increased capability to our leaders by providing them the flexibility and additional combat power to move rapidly over extended distances, deliver precision direct fires and execute reconnaissance and security missions to prevent, shape, and win in complex threat environments. This effort will also assist the MCoE in conducting a comprehensive Capabilities Based Assessment of our reconnaissance and security formations.

Just as we are taking the above actions at the MCoE, we could use your help and would like to hear your thoughts on how we can create a culture of readiness across the armor force by addressing some of the following questions:

*How do we develop Armor and Cavalry expertise (Ground Mobility; Mobile, Protected, Precision Firepower and Reconnaissance & Security) necessary to perform uniquely expert work in new, unexpected situations?*

*How do we develop adaptive leaders that are confident and ready to lead through ambiguity?*

*What is our culture of training readiness? How do we conduct realistic, physically and mentally challenging training focused on the fundamentals to prevent, shape and win against emerging threats when called upon?*

*How do we best create a culture of readiness where our Soldiers and Leaders are stewards of their equipment and their profession?*





It is an honor to serve as your interim Commandant and will continue to work tirelessly to ensure our Armor and Cavalrymen are ready and prepared to defeat emerging threats.

Forge the Thunderbolt! COL Scott King





HQ U.S. Army Armor School 

	Armor CMDT (interim)	(706) 545-2029	COL Scott King
	Armor CSM	(706) 545-8169	CSM Miles S. Wilson
	DCMDT	(706) 545-3815	COL John Hermeling
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	ARNG Liaison	(706) 626-2306	LTC David Guido
	Armor Historian	(706) 626-1491	Dr. Robert Cameron
	OCOA Director	(706) 545-1352	George DeSario
	OCOA SGM	(706) 545-7725	SGM Gregory Proft
	OCOA (EIA, DRAPER)	(706) 626-TANK (8265)	usarmy.benning.mcoe.mbx.armor-ocoa@mail.mil
	<b>ARMOR</b> magazine	(706) 545-2698	usarmy.benning.tradoc.mbx.armor-magazine@mail.mil





192<sup>nd</sup> IN BDE 

	<b>COL Ron Clark</b>		<b>CSM Clyde Glenn</b>	
	 <b>1-16 IN BCT</b>	LTC Cale Brown	CSM Eugene Dydasco	
	 <b>2-47 IN BCT</b>	LTC Christopher Bresko	CSM Daniel Dennison	
	 <b>30th AG (Rec)</b>	LTC Stuart Kidder	CSM Earla Reddock	

194<sup>th</sup> AR BDE 

	<b>COL Kevin MacWatters</b>		<b>CSM Robert Tompkins</b>	
	 <b>1-81 AR</b>	LTC Dawson Plummer	CSM Dean Lockhart	
	 <b>3-81 AR</b>	LTC Jeff McCoy	CSM Anthony Wagner	
	 <b>5-15 CAV</b>	LTC Michael Bermingham	CSM Samuel Roark	

316<sup>th</sup> CAV BDE 

	<b>COL David Davidson</b>		<b>CSM Michael Clemens</b>	
	 <b>1-16 CAV</b>	LTC Mark Brown	CSM Eric Littlejohn	
	 <b>2-16 CAV</b>	LTC Oscar Diano	CSM Bradley Feltman	
	 <b>3-16 CAV</b>	LTC Andre Mackey	CSM Michael Williamson	

<b>TCM</b>			
Mr. John Miller	TCM-ABCT and TCM-Recon	(706) 545-2517	john.w.miller.civ@mail.mil
COL Ed House	TCM-IBCT	(706) 545-2078	claud.e.house@us.army.mil
COL Elmer Speights	TCM-Stryker	(706) 545-5364	elmer.speights3.mil@mail.mil

**Army National Guard Regional Training Institutes (RTIs)**

School code	958	1016	998	1012	1017	997
Location	Gowen Field Armor SME Site IDARNG Boise, ID	ARNG Res. Tng Ctr Smyrna, TN	Camp Shelby Hattiesburg, MS	Fort Indiantown Gap Annville, PA	Camp Mabry Austin, TX	Camp Ripley Little Falls, MN
ARNG RTI	1-204 <sup>th</sup>	2-117 <sup>th</sup>	1-154 <sup>th</sup>	1-166 <sup>th</sup>	1-136 <sup>th</sup>	175 <sup>th</sup> Regt
<b>M1A1 Tank Commander Certification</b> 171-S13M/19K2/3/4	X					
<b>Scout Commander Certification</b> 171-S13X/ASID3	X	X	X			
<b>Cavalry Scout (MOS-T)</b> 171-19D10 (HMMWV/M3) (R)	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Cavalry Scout Adv Ldr</b> 171-19D30-C45	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Armor Crewman (M1A1)</b> 171-19K10 (M1A1) (R)	X		X			
<b>Armor Crewman (M1A2)</b> 171-19K10 (M1A2) (R)	X					
<b>Armor Crewman Adv Ldr</b> 171-19K30-C45	X		X	X		

Courses highlighted in yellow are not yet supported with required equipment.

**From the CSM's OP**

Greetings maneuver force! This edition of **Thunderbolt Blast** is jam-packed full of information. We had to reduce the font size just to get it all to fit on three pages, so I'm not going to expound prolifically. That will be the last time you ever see me use those two words again!



We survived sequestration and now wait for news of what brigades are going, staying and what the end strength of the Army is really going to be. I'm sure the CSA is going to make the best decisions that will posture the Army for 2020 and beyond. We owe him and the nation our solemn oath that we will provide the absolute best Armor force prepared to execute any mission called upon.

One way we as leaders can do this rather easily is with the proper management of the semi-centralized promotion system. Right now we are doing a poor job of boarding our primary-zone-eligible 19D/Ks, and at the same time, we are not properly counseling and denying those Soldiers who do not need to be on the Command List Integration (CLI). I ask that you battalion and squadron CSMs really dig into this matter. Feel free to contact the Armor Branch at HRC and they can give you the complete statistics.

These are amazing days in the Army. Our Soldiers are deployed all over the world doing amazing things they were never ever trained to do. The reason they are doing so well is the amazing leadership, mentorship and training by you all. Thanks for all you do every day to make this the best army in the world!

Memorial Day is a very special weekend. God bless the families of and all those who gave their life in defense of freedom, democracy and the American way of life. It is in their honor we serve.

Armor Strong!

Thunderbolt 7

**Upcoming Events**  
9-13 Sep 13 - Maneuver Warfighter Conference

**Armor School Links**

**MCoE:** <https://www.benning.army.mil>  
**Armor School:** <https://www.benning.army.mil/armor/>  
**ARMOR magazine:** <https://www.benning.army.mil/armor/ArmorMagazine/index.htm>

