

# Thunderbolt Blast

Monthly Armor School Newsletter

Vol. 2, Issue 4 APRIL 2013



## Armor School Soldiers

**194<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED BRIGADE: MARKSMANSHIP.** The transformation of volunteers into lethal cavalry scouts begins by establishing proficiency in individually assigned weapon systems, predominately the M4-series carbine. In 19D One-Station Unit Training (OSUT), this proficiency is built through rigorous Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) and Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (ARM) training events. BRM's focus is to teach Soldiers the fundamentals of marksmanship and to train them to qualify with their assigned M4 and iron sights. On average, each Soldier receives more than 82 hours of instructor training in classroom, simulator and live-fire range settings, and shoots more than 310 rounds throughout BRM. Following weapons qualification, Soldiers progress to ARM, where they learn how to operate the M68 Close Combat Optic, AN/PEQ-15 Laser and PVS-14 Night Vision Device in conjunction with their individually assigned weapon. Also, Soldiers are introduced to close-quarters combat by conducting a series of reflexive fires, barrier shoots and night fires. Soldiers receive more than 44 hours of instruction during ARM and shoot more than 220 rounds each. Regardless of future operating environments, training in BRM proficiency and ARM skills ensures the lethality and survivability of future cavalry scouts within the U.S. Army.

How are we doing? Are your 19Ds arriving at your unit able to qualify with their M4s? Please send comments to 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: COURSE UPDATES.** The brigade continues to strive on all fronts to provide the best training possible for our Soldiers in all our courses. Armor Basic Officer Leadership Course (ABOLC) is consistently using captains from the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) to train with lieutenants during their field-training exercises. We added a mechanized infantry platoon to add realism to their training. The course is also currently in the middle of the first pilot course using the Adaptive Soldier Leader Training and Education (ASLTE) methodology. The brigade recently graduated the first Mobile Gun System (MGS) Master Gunner Course and will begin the next course in mid-July. Finally, the Army Reconnaissance Course (ARC) is working with the Aviation Center of Excellence to provide air support during its field-training exercises and has put Bradleys back into this valuable course. It is a great time to be a cavalryman!

How are we doing? Do your new Armor Lieutenants better understand combined arms maneuver? Are you MGS MGs providing the right amount of expertise? Do your ARC graduates understand air-ground integration? Please send comments to MAJ Roy Bolar, (706) 626-8206 or [roy.l.bolar.mil@mail.mil](mailto:roy.l.bolar.mil@mail.mil).

## Armor Branch and OCOA Personnel Notes

**WHERE HAVE ALL THE RANGERS GONE?** According to MTOE, there are 487 Skill Level 2 and 3 Ranger slots across Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) and Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) scout platoons. Currently only 19 percent of Ranger-coded 19D positions are filled with Ranger-qualified 19Ds. The foremost reason you should send your scouts to Ranger School is to benefit the soldiers and the unit. Another reason you should send your scouts to Ranger School is that there are re-enlistment bonuses for Ranger-qualified troopers. According to MILPER Message 13-030, "Selective Re-enlistment Bonus (SRB)-Tiered Program," issued 04 FEB 13, sergeants can receive a Tier 5 SRB of up to \$11,600. Staff sergeants can receive

## From the Chief of Armor's Turret

I'm often asked, "How is the merger of the Armor School into Fort Benning going?" After eight months of assessing, I can report that it is good and to use a football analogy, 'we are proceeding to matriculate the ball down the field.' Already helped immensely by the work of the 45th and 46th Chiefs of Armor, their counterparts of Infantry, and former MCoE CGs; the team of MG Mc-Master and BG Haight have continued to ensure that we are fully part of the team and that the focus here is on Combined Arms.



Additionally, our Armor School leaders are simply incredible – it is a joy to watch them in action and witness their inspirational leadership and hard work that make the Armor School a top notch organization. Our brigades continue to increase rigor and improve facilities, ranges, training areas, and motor pools to provide world class training for our Armor and Cavalry leaders and Troopers.

COL Ron Clark, CSM Glenn and the High Ground Team continue to produce exceptional BCT Soldiers from civilians for our Army; and even more, through their renowned Leader Development Program they are focused on sending our Drill Sergeants back to the Operational Force better prepared to lead Soldiers.

COL Kevin MacWatters, CSM Tompkins and the Battle Hard Team are on the cutting edge for our Army with implementing the Blended Rotational Interactive Training Environment (BRITE) which maximizes our technological capabilities to provide higher quality training with immediate feedback to improve the instructional delivery to our millennial Troopers. In addition to producing world class Scouts and Tankers, they are leading the way in the Army for female integration into both the Bradley and Abrams mechanic occupational specialty.

COL Dave Davidson, CSM Clemens and the De-

a Tier 4 SRB of up to \$10,400.

The Armor School intends to code all dismounted 19D NCO positions as Rangers in all BCT formations. This means there will be at least three sergeant and two staff sergeant Ranger positions in every scout platoon. This could mean up to 1,410 sergeant and staff sergeant positions. As part of the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) and are colocated with the Infantry School, we have more opportunities than ever for 19Ds to attend Ranger School. This course is a long-term investment for the trooper and the unit.

**ENLISTED PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT DIVISION: QUALITATIVE SERVICE PROGRAM.** The Qualitative Service Program (QSP) is designed to identify NCOs for involuntary separation from active duty in an effort to achieve mandated end strengths; align the force by MOS and skill level, ensuring the attainment of desired grade and experience mix is balanced across occupational groups; support sustainment of viable career paths across grades and MOS; and enhance the quality of the NCO corps by retaining NCOs with the greatest potential for future contribution to the Army. Quality Soldiers across all grades will be asked to leave the Army. Selection for QSP in no way diminishes a Soldier's contribution to the Army, and they should be treated with the utmost respect and dignity.

Eligibility for QSP only applies to those MOSs announced by MILPER message; the most updated information on QSP is found in the most current message. Time-in-grade (TIG) requirements for QSP are three years TIG and less than 31 years Active Federal Service (AFS) for command sergeants major/sergeants major; four years TIG and less than 28 years AFS for first sergeants/master sergeants; four years TIG and less than 25 years AFS for sergeants first class; and four years TIG and less than 21 years AFS for staff sergeants.

Once a MOS is identified for QSP, the selection criteria of individual Soldiers is based on an NCO's potential for future contributions to the Army, IAW the board's memorandum of instruction. For CSM/SGM, the board will limit consideration to the Soldier's performance since his last promotion.

## Army National Guard Updates

**ONE ARMY SCHOOL SYSTEM (OASS).** Did you know about the Army National Guard (ARNG) Regional Training Institutes (RTIs)? The RTIs are part of the OASS, which enable Soldiers from the Active Army, U.S. Army Reserve and ARNG to attend, regardless of training institution and component, if that school meets the Soldier's needs in terms of training, timing and location.

**HAVE AN ARNG ARMOR QUESTION?** Call or email LTC Thomas C. Kimball (Chris) at (706) 626-2306 or [thomas.kimball@us.army.mil](mailto:thomas.kimball@us.army.mil). LTC Kimball reports directly to the Armor School commandant, liaises with the commanders of all ARNG armor and cavalry units as well as the RTIs and works directly with TCM-ABCT, TCM-BFSB and TCM-Stryker at the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) at Fort Benning, GA.

**M1A1 MASTER GUNNER COURSE.** With the current Active Component force structure changing to 100 percent M1A2 SEP by 2015, the Active Army no longer has a requirement to train the 19K M1A1 Master Gunners. As a result, M1A1 tanks will reside exclusively in the ARNG, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) and with U.S. allied nations through Foreign Military Sales (FMS). One COA the Armor School is developing is a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the National Guard Bureau and USMC to change the course to an Interservice Training Review Organization (ITRO) course. The shared responsibility among ARNG, USMC and FBGA will help maintain a common-level-of-service support required to support the program of instruction (Pol) and training load. POC: LTC Thomas C. Kimball, (706) 626-2306, email [thomas.kimball@us.army.mil](mailto:thomas.kimball@us.army.mil).

## Capability Managers Updates

**TCM-STRYKER.** The Stryker Brigade Combat Team's reconnaissance squadron is currently organized into nine platoons, with four Stryker reconnaissance vehicles (RVs) per platoon and 23 19D MOS Soldiers. The Infantry battalion's scout platoon is built on four RVs and 23 11B Soldiers. There are emerging capability gaps at the platoon and troop levels that future reconnaissance organizations must address. The first gap is a lack of dismounted scouting resources. Based on the experiences in OIF and OEF we believe that there are three gaps that we need to address to improve the combat effectiveness of the Stryker Scout Platoons. First, there are not enough scouts in the formation to man required reconnaissance observation posts, conduct dismounted patrols or rapidly transition to hold terrain over time. The second gap is a lack of air-to-ground capability that could be mitigated by more robust unmanned aerial systems at the platoon and troop level, capable of conducting SIGINT and IMINT for platoons and troops. The third gap is a need for a more robust troop command post that has real-time access to information that affects the SBCT as a whole. Lastly, the number of vehicles in the scout platoons must increase from four to six to conduct effective route reconnaissance.

And what are we doing about this? Currently we are developing courses of action to increase all scout platoons to 6x6 (six personnel, six vehicles) = 36 formations. Please contact us with your ideas on how best to do this. Contact George Schurr, (706) 545-5375, email [george.s.schurr2.civ@mail.mil](mailto:george.s.schurr2.civ@mail.mil).

stroyer Team continue to deftly shape ABOLC and ARC into germane and realistic combined arms training experiences. ABOLC is maneuvering and conducting combined arms operations in Good Hope MTA and executing live fire operations on Hastings Range; ARC is conducting air-ground integration with ACoE students, ARNG and Marine pilots to increase the combined arms competency in our Cavalry leaders.

The Armor School will continue to work with the MCoE Staff to move our Reconnaissance and Security initiatives down the field for another first down. We are working hard with industry to develop and acquire improved ammunition and power for our future tankers. We are continuing to standardize our Scout formations with a 6 x 36 vehicle to Soldier platoon and getting Scouts out of HMMWVs and under armor. Finally, we remain focused on the future and the evolving complex operating environment by developing solutions to educate, train, and equip our Scouts of the future.

Judi and I are nearly out the door for Korea and I can say with absolute confidence that the Armor School is in great shape for the transition – COL Scott King will serve as our interim Commandant with CSM Wilson at his side and COL John Hermeling as his Deputy. This team, along with George Desario and the OCOA Team will, without a doubt, continue to ensure that the Armor School continues adapting future challenges and produce and train the best Armor and Cavalry Soldiers and Leaders in the world.















I could not be more proud of our Soldiers and Leaders across the Armor School – they continue to carry the torch with fierce determination and a commitment to excellence – our future is in good hands.

All of this said, we need help from the Operational Force on telling us where we are falling short with our training. As I did when I entered, am asking all to keep the dialogue open and request you continuously provide feedback to us. One area which I would ask that we work on are getting more of our Force Ranger qualified as this is a superb small unit leadership course and may provide those who earn the Tab more options in terms of assignments for the future. Another is your input on our Scout of the Future Concept. More will be provided to you, but this is important to ensure that we as the Army's Reconnaissance and Security trainers are looking forward to determine how we evolve those critical skills for our future force.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the MCoE CG, Staff, retired Armor Soldiers and Leaders (at Benning and elsewhere) as well as the greater Chattahoochee Valley Region for their hard work and outstanding support of the Armor School, our Soldiers and their families. The Armor School remains a tremendous organization because of your support.

We cannot, and will not, slow our 'matriculation' and momentum here at Fort Benning as we progress downfield regarding Armor and Cavalry training – our Army and Nation can't risk it.

Forge the Thunderbot!

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	Armor CSM	(706) 545-8169	CSM Miles S. Wilson
	DCMDT	(706) 545-3815	COL John C. Hermeling
	ARNG Liaison	(706) 626-2306	LTC Thomas Kimball
	MGMT Staff	(706) 626-1406	LTC Joseph Jasper
	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)	email OCOA
	<b>ARMOR</b> magazine	(706) 545-2698	email <b>ARMOR</b>
192 <sup>nd</sup> IN BDE 			
	COL Ron Clark		CSM Clyde Glenn
	 1-46 IN BCT	LTC Brown, Cale	CSM Dydasco, Eugene
	 2-47 IN BCT	LTC Feger, Kyle	CSM Dennison, Daniel
	 30th AG (Rec)	LTC Kidder, Stuart	CSM Reddock, Earla
194 <sup>th</sup> AR BDE 			
	COL Kevin MacWatters		CSM Robert Tompkins
	 1-81 AR	LTC Plummer, Dawson	CSM Lockhart, Dean
	 3-81 AR	LTC McCoy, Jeff	CSM Wagner, Anthony
	 5-15 CAV	LTC Koloski, Andrew	CSM Roark, Samuel
316 <sup>th</sup> CAV BDE 			
	COL David Davidson		CSM Michael Clemens
	 1-16 CAV	LTC Brown, Mark	CSM Littlejohn, Eric
	 2-16 CAV	LTC Diano, Oscar	CSM Feltman, Bradley
	 3-16 CAV	LTC Mackey, Andre	CSM Williamson, Michael
TCM			
Mr. John Miller	TCM-ABCT and TCM-BFSB	(706) 545-2517	john.w.miller.civ@mail.mil
COL House, Ed	TCM-IBCT	(706) 545-2078	claud.e.house@us.army.mil
COL Speights, Elmer	TCM-Stryker	(706) 545-5364	elmer.speights3.mil@mail.mil

## Army National Guard Regional Training Institutes (RTIs)

	School code	958	1016	998	1012	1017	1012
	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
M1A1 Tank Commander Certification 171-SI3M/19K2/3/4		X					
Scout Commander Certification 171-SI3X/ASID3		X	X	X			
Cavalry Scout (MOS-T) 171-19D10 (HMMWV/M3) (R)		X	X	X	X	X	X
Cavalry Scout Adv Ldr 171-19D30-C45		X	X	X	X	X	
Armor Crewman (M1A1) 171-19K10 (M1A1) (R)		X		X			
Armor Crewman (M1A2) 171-19K10 (M1A2) (R)		X					
Armor Crewman Adv Ldr 171-19K30-C45		X		X	X		

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

## From the CSM's OP

"April showers bring May flowers." That is what we've all heard and seen. This April we say goodbye to COL(P) Laughlin, the 47<sup>th</sup> Chief of Armor, and his lovely wife Judi. It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming them to the Armor School, but in their short time, an amazing amount of good has been started. This Thunderbolt Blast, Gainey Cup, many initiatives to improve our training and much work on the transformation of the Armor Force for the Army of 2020 has occurred under the watchful eye of 47.



Our loss is the Army operational force's gain. We will promote 47 to brigadier general and bid farewell all in the same ceremony April 12. BG and Mrs. Laughlin will then enjoy a short vacation before a long plane ride to Korea. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ID is getting an outstanding Army team to serve as the DCG-M. The Armor School will maintain the momentum started by 47 and spring forward as we receive the 48<sup>th</sup> Chief of Armor. Before you call or email, I do not know who that is going to be.

To COL(P) Laughlin and Judi, thank you for your leadership, mentorship and friendship of the Wilson family. Tara, the kids and I have certainly appreciated all you have done for us, the Armor School and the Armor force during your time here. We will miss "the Terrible Towel" and "Giddyup," but we wish you both the best, happiest and, most of all, safest tour while in Korea. If you need help with North Korea, call me - I'd gladly serve for you anywhere again!

To all, thanks for all you do every day to make the Armor force and the Army the best in the world!

Armor Strong!

Thunderbolt 7

### 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>

