

Thunderbolt Blast

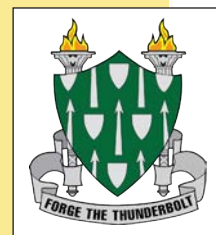
Monthly Armor School Newsletter

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From the Chief of Armor's Turret

Recently Army Chief of Staff GEN Odierno announced a planned manpower reduction resulting in "one of the largest organizational changes since World War II as we transition from a force at war." GEN Odierno communicated the importance of this transition in recent media addresses and during his visit to Fort Benning. He explained that as the Army undertakes this plan to reduce in size and strength, we concurrently would reorganize our BCTs to ensure they become more lethal, flexible and agile.



Plans to reorganize within our Army have led the Armor School to analyze the organization of our Armor and Cavalry formations. To remain at the forefront, we are setting out to improve our reconnaissance and security capabilities with the initiative highlighting the importance of the scout squad. The scout squad initiative is a critical concept that recognizes the value of a standardized squad as the building block for all reconnaissance and security organizations. By standardizing the foundation of our organizations, we will achieve maximum versatility, survivability, protection, mobility and firepower to conduct effective reconnaissance and security operations during combined-arms maneuver and wide-area security.

The scout squads by design will consist of six Soldiers varying in rank. The scout squads will increase the leader-to-led ratio and will empower the platoon to operate as an efficient team. The scout squads also allow several independent and equally capable parts to accomplish the mission in a more efficient and effective manner. Having this organiza-

MANEUVER WARFIGHTER CONFERENCE 2013. The Maneuver Center of Excellence will host the Maneuver Warfighter Conference, "Developing a Common Vision to Adapt the Maneuver Force for the Challenges of Tomorrow," Sept. 9-13. Each day's briefing and panels will center on a specific topic: Army leader development and strategies, reconnaissance and security, and "shape, influence and consolidate." We expect this to be an outstanding event, even though budget uncertainties will limit the scale compared to previous years. We will conduct DCO-Connect-enabled discussions on warfighter challenges, future-force requirements, Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS), global responsiveness, current force-design updates within each brigade combat team (BCT), reconnaissance and security at echelons above brigade, forcible-entry operations, the state of the Infantry and Armor branches, and the scout squad ("informing the decisive force" and "preparing for future multinational operations"). The Maneuver Center of Excellence will also recognize the winners of the 2013 Doughboy Award and Order of Saint George Gold Medallion at our annual Maneuver Dinner. As a maneuver force, opportunities to share ideas and shape our Army for the demands of the next decade are a significant occurrence. We look forward to the professional dialogue provided by our Armor and Cavalry community as we anticipate this to be a successful event. A draft agenda can be found at <http://www.benning.army.mil/mcoe/maneuverconference/>.

Armor School Soldiers

316TH CAVALRY BRIGADE. The 1-16 Cav maintains a high optempo as MCoE reorganization continues. Two troops will case their colors in the next 90 days, with the remaining three troops increasing POI support to ABOLC, ARC, RSLC and the Master Gunner Course. Planning continues for the integration of an infantry company from 1-29, which will eventually provide POI support to Bradley Fighting Vehicle functional courses. The 1-16 is again preparing to provide the Maneuver Battle Lab with trained Cavalry scouts to support experimental testing of the six-vehicle, 36-Soldier Stryker platoon, testing and validating emerging requirements from the Army's Stryker brigade combat teams. In addition to ongoing POI support requirements, the squadron has been aggressively planning to execute squadron gunnery in September for the M1A2, M3A3 and humvees. The ability to plan, resource and execute this training event is instrumental in maintaining proficient crews capable of providing first-rate support to various courses throughout the MCoE. Upon completion of gunnery, 1-16 Cav will have increased the proficiency of Soldiers tasked with supporting Armor leaders and Soldiers throughout the Armor community.

194TH ARMORED BRIGADE: LANGUAGE AND THE SCOUT OF THE FUTURE. Cultural competence, communication, adaptability and engagement skills are 21st Century Soldier competencies the Armor School is developing in line with Army Learning Model 2015. Scouts embody these skills, and the Army's regionally aligned forces concept will put those skills to use in expeditionary operations. Cavalry organizations will be the force of choice for future contingency operations and foreign internal defense missions. With a view toward creating a scout force that is better suited to serve in our regionally aligned ready forces, 194th Armored Brigade has begun integrating language testing into 19D OSUT. To ensure language skills are a matter of record, all prospective scouts will be surveyed for existing language capabilities and tested by the Defense Language Proficiency Test, an oral proficiency interview, or both. Cavalrymen in two recent OSUT classes displayed significant skill in languages as diverse as German, Chinese, Bosnian, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Mien, Ewe, French, Fon, Hungarian, Korean and Italian. Also, the 194th is moving toward 100-percent testing of scouts on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery to allow rapid screening of Soldiers who should attend language mobile-training-team efforts prior to deployment or in preparation for a regionally aligned ready status. If you have any comments or concerns, please call or email CPT Nicholas Bryan, (706) 626-5942, or nicholas.a.bryan@mail.mil.

Armor Branch and OCOA Personnel Notes

CENTRALIZED SELECTION LIST (CSL). As the Army conducts realignment operations, we will continue to experience turbulence in the slating process, at both the O-5 and O-6 levels, but one constant remains how an officer is selected for command. Analysis continues to show performance, regardless of position, is the key. Armor Branch did very well on the FY14 LTC CSL, which was released July 22 (available at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/Officer/Centralized%20Selection%20List%20CSL%20Results>). We had 33 officers (33/156 = 24.2 percent) selected as a principal for battalion command, an increase from 31 principals last year. Including both principals and alternates, we had 61 officers selected (61/156 = 39.1 percent). Of the 33 principals selected, 29 of those (87.9 percent) were selected on their first look. Comparatively, Infantry Branch had 67 officers (67/212 = 31.6 percent) selected as principals for battalion command. (We believe Infantry Branch percentages are higher than Armor's because Infantry officers have 30 battalion command opportunities that only they can compete for, with 56 more officers competing.) In the A03P (combat-arms (IN/AR) maneuver) category, AR Branch had 23 principals and 26 alternates out of 135 officers who chose to compete, for a 17-percent principal selection rate and a 36-percent overall selection rate. Out of 52 officers selected for A03P commands, AR had 23 (44.2 percent) and IN had 29 (55.8 percent). There were four deferred (un-slatted) principals in this category: three AR and one IN. In the A19T (Armor training) category, 105 AR officers elected to compete, and four principals (3.8 percent) and 14 alternates were selected for a selection percentage of 17.1 percent. We also had two officers selected as principals in combat-arms installation, one in branch-immaterial operations, one in branch-immaterial recruiting, one in branch-immaterial strategic support and one in branch-immaterial installation.

FY15 LTC CSL. MILPER Message 13-160, announcing the eligibility criteria and procedures for the FY15 LTC CSL board, was released June 27 (available at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/milper/13-160>). The MFE board will convene Sept. 4. We expect eligibility and slating guidance to remain the same, but procedures are subject to change. Eligibility: standard eligibility requirements can be seen in the MILPER message; however, a significant addition that should be highlighted is that officers enrolled in EFMP are ineligible for consideration if their EFMP is not updated (is expired) by Sept. 1. Procedures: required thru date on all complete-the-record OERs is June 1; MyBoard file opens July 22; preference site opens Aug. 1; OERs due, error free, to HRC-Evaluations NLT June 1; MyBoard file closes Sept. 4; preference site closes Aug. 21.

CHANGES IN CSL BOARD. MILPER Message 13-158, announcing changes to the CSL board, was released June 25, 2013 (available at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/milper/13-158>). The changes include: 1) Starting this year, CSL boards are "opt-in," so officers wishing to compete are required to log in to the CPD tool and submit preferences. (If an officer does not do so, he will not be considered. 2) All officers who elect to compete will be "all in" for all sub-categories for which they are eligible. 3) Officers can preference the different sub-categories but cannot "opt-out" of any. 4) The number of times an officer can be considered for CSL has been reduced from four to three. 5) Officers who elect to compete will receive one score by the board, not separate scores by sub-category. 6) The officer with the highest score will get his No. 1 preferred sub-category and so on. 7) Alternates will be consolidated by functional category (MFE, OSD, FSD) and will be activated in that order. The CSA's CSL slating guidance is available at http://www.hrc.army.mil/site/ASSETS/PDF/FY15_CSA_Slating_Guidance_ORG_SGN.pdf.

DRAPER ARMOR LEADERSHIP AWARD UNIT-LEVEL SUBMISSIONS. The Draper Award is presented annually to a deserving tank company or cavalry troop selected by the unit's division/regiment commander in accordance with the Draper SOP. Evaluation is conducted for the period of Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. Each division/regiment is responsible for establishing its own criteria for selecting the top tank company and/or cavalry troop. The Draper SOP can be obtained from the Office of the Chief of Armor Website at <http://www.benning.army.mil/Armor/OCO>.

2013 FREDERICK M. FRANKS AWARD. The suspense for the 2013 Frederick M. Franks Award was July 31, 2013. This prestigious award will be presented to an Active or Reserve Component officer, warrant officer, noncommissioned officer or 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 board will convene and individually evaluate and score packets. Once all scores are verified, the nominee with the highest total point score will be declared the winner. In the event of a tie, the U.S. Army Army School (USAARMS) commandant will decide the winner. The selected individual will be presented the award during the Maneuver Conference in September 2013. For more information, please visit <http://www.benning.army.mil/Armor/OCO>.

Doctrine

The MCoE Doctrine and Collective Training Division (DOTD) has received tremendous support from the armored force in developing maneuver doctrine at the brigade combat team (BCT) and below level. Collaboration with leaders and Soldiers throughout the force continues to be decisive in the production and revision of doctrinal manuals containing content that is relevant in influencing operations at tactical level. With your assistance, we shall continue to develop maneuver doctrine for the armored BCT (ABCT) and below, providing the right information in the right manuals for the appropriate echelon of maneuver organizations. Currently under development are the following two maneuver manuals: ATP 3-90.5, **Combined Arms Battalion**, and ATP 3-21.71, **Mechanized Infantry Platoon and Squad (Bradley)**. Both manuals are in initial draft staffing through Aug. 14, 2013, and scheduled to be posted for review by late October 2013. ATP 3-90.5 and ATP 3-21.71 can be viewed and downloaded at the following link: <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/page/abctdoctrine>. The ABCT Doctrine Branch solicits your feedback and comments on these manuals. Your points of contact within the ABCT Doctrine Branch are LTC Stephon Calhoun at stephon.calhoun@mail.mil and Bruce Moore at bruce.m.moore2.civ@mail.mil.

tional structure as the building block of the platoon will provide our platoons with manned, trained and equipped elements capable of dismounted and mounted operations simultaneously. Analysis of the scout squad's effectiveness is underway with members of 1-1 Cavalry Division, culminating during their upcoming DATE rotation to NTC in February 2014. The Armor School will officially present the scout squad to the maneuver community during the upcoming Maneuver Warfighter Conference, and we look forward to your feedback.

Also, in March 2014, Fort Benning will host our second Sullivan Cup competition. This physically and mentally demanding world-class event will determine the "top tank crew." This year's event will be open to competitors from all active-duty divisions, the Army National Guard, U.S. Marine Corps and select allied nations. Events during the competition will include demanding physical challenges, live and virtual firing exercises, knowledge-based tests and a requirement to prove a mastery of gunnery skills during individual and crewmember-based exercises. As we draw closer to the competition, information on dates, registration and participation will be provided through our media forums.

Please do not hesitate to tell us how we are doing by contacting me directly at john.c.hermeling@mail.mil.

Forge the Thunderbolt!

COL John C Hermeling

From the CSM's OP

My ride on this journey began in February 2012. Now, 17 months, two commandants and two interim commandants later, I end my time as Thunderbolt 7.

A new commandant, MCoE restructuring and events in my Family have paved the way for my exit. I'm thankful to MG McMaster and CSM Carabello for allowing me the opportunity to assist my Family, prepare for my impending retirement and still have an effect on the armor force of the future from a far less demanding vantage point.



I want to thank all of you for your support to the Armor School, your leadership of Armor Soldiers and your sacrifices to this great nation of ours. May God bless each of you, your Families and Soldiers, all those in harm's way, the Army and the United States of America.

I hope to see you all somewhere down in Fiddler's Green!








Armor Strong!

7 out!




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194th AR BDE 

	COL Scott King		CSM Robert Tompkins	
		1-46 IN BCT	LTC Matthew Scalia	CSM Eugene Dydasco
		2-47 IN BCT	LTC Christopher Bresko	CSM Daniel Dennison
		30th AG (Rec)	LTC David Welch	CSM Nyeedra T. Edwards
		1-81 AR	LTC Dawson Plummer	CSM Dean Lockhart
		3-81 AR	LTC Jeff McCoy	CSM Anthony Wagner
		5-15 CAV	LTC Michael Birmingham	CSM Samuel Roark

197th IN BDE 

	LTC Joseph Pierce			
		1-29 IN	LTC Richard Surowiec	1SG Andrew Malik
		2-29 IN	LTC Darren Jennings	CSM Curtis Arnold

316th CAV BDE 

	COL David Davidson		CSM Jeremiah Inman	
		1-16 CAV	LTC Mark Brown	CSM Eric Littlejohn
		2-16 CAV	LTC Oscar Diano	CSM Bradley Feltman
		3-16 CAV	LTC James Hayes	CSM Michael Williamson

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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>

