

# THE NCO JOURNAL

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**BEST**

**SAPPER**

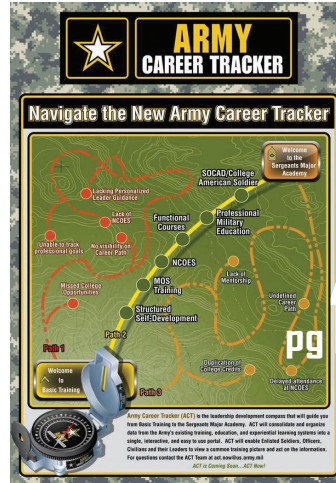
**2010**



## ON THE COVER

Sgt. Joshua Hanks of 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Forward Operating Base Echo, Al Diwaniyah, Iraq, carefully removes the sand from a mine on the mine-clearing course during the 2010 Best Sapper Competition in April at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Photo by Michael L. Lewis



# MAY 2010 CONTENTS

## THE NCO JOURNAL

### EDITORIAL

FROM THE SMA  
WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE  
SOLDIER FITNESS? **2**

### NEWS 2 USE

NEWS AND INFORMATION AIMED AT  
BENEFITING TODAY'S NCOs/SOLDIERS **5**

- Operations Process manual released ■
- CID warns of online romance scams ■
- First T-11 Airborne Course students graduate ■

### Cover story

BEST SAPPER  
COMPETITION **8**

*Michael L. Lewis*

UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS:  
THE EYES OF THE ARMY **14**

*Cindy Ramirez*

TRACKING THE LEARNING  
INTEGRATION DIVISION **18**

*Linda Crippen*

NEW CPX FOR  
SERGEANTS MAJOR COURSE **22**

*Linda Crippen*

SOLDIERS TEST THE LATEST  
BATTLEFIELD EQUIPMENT **26**

*Angela Simental*



SIMULATOR TRAINING: **30**  
MORE THAN JUST A GAME  
*Spc. Samuel Phillips*

SERGEANTS' CORNER: **34**  
THE NCOER  
*Michael L. Lewis*

FROM THE FIELD **40**  
*A selection of NCO stories and essays  
from around the Army*

PHOTO JOURNAL **44**  
*A visual look at NCOs in action*

**36**  
NCO STORIES  
*Sgt. Gary Beikirch  
Staff Sgt. Matthew Matlock  
Staff Sgt. Conrad Begaye*

**48**  
ROLL CALL  
*We honor the men and women who have  
sacrificed their lives in current operations  
around the world.*

## THE NCO JOURNAL

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From the SMA

# What Is Comprehensive Soldier Fitness?

The focus of this article is to capture the work and intent of the chief of staff of the Army, Gen. George W. Casey Jr.; Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum, director, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program; Dr. Karen Reivich, Dr. Martin Seligman and the staff and faculty at the University of Pennsylvania; and the work of many leaders on the Army Staff. This document serves to pull together all the published pieces of information on the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program that are relevant and needed by a company/ troop/battery commander and first sergeant, their junior officers and NCOs.

Comprehensive Soldier Fitness is a holistic program focused on developing the five dimensions of strength validated by the World Health Organization. These dimensions are physical, emotional, social, spiritual and family. The chief of staff of the Army established the Army's CSF program in 2009 with the intent to increase strength and resilience, and enhance performance in all of our Soldiers, family members, and our Department of the Army Civilians. The program focuses on assessing the current strengths of each individual across all five dimensions, and then provides the training and education to increase overall strength and resilience. This program is tied to the lifelong learning principles of our professional military education system, starting in initial entry officer and enlisted courses. This program focuses on building strength in each of the five dimensions of strength over an individual's service with the Army.

We use daily physical training to strengthen our bodies in preparing for the rigors of combat and the daily physical demands of our occupational specialties. We want Soldiers to experience growth and development in each physical training activity throughout their Army career. Physical training is part of our daily lives and our culture.

The intent of the CSF program is to expand our focus on fitness by strengthening our bodies and minds across all five dimensions of strength. Every Soldier, Army civilian and family member will face adversity – physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual – in many forms throughout their lives. We want the members of our team to do more than just “cope”

with adversity; we want them to grow from their life experiences.

For example, two different Soldiers both experience similar traumatic events – divorce, loss of a comrade, bankruptcy, etc. One Soldier falls into deep depression and drinks heavily; his work performance suffers and finally destroys his Army career. The second Soldier goes through a period of grieving. But, like a runner, the Soldier gains a second wind and moves forward in his life – stronger and more focused than before. We want all the members of our team to as resilient as Soldier number two.

Reflecting on the past eight years of war and our deployment experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, we can now begin to understand the individual health and resilience problems associated with our operational tempo. We know the great majority of Soldiers who deploy to combat experience individual growth, strengthening their physical and mental resilience. As an example, deployed Soldiers adapt to living in austere conditions, face their fears of combat, adapt to long work hours seven days a week, and physically strengthen their bodies throughout the deployment. Most of these Soldiers return from a deployment stronger and more resilient.

However, we also know there is a small percentage who return from deployment suffering from non-battle-related injuries, including muscular and skeletal injuries like a torn rotator-cuff or a torn meniscus (physical dimension); nightmares or feeling depressed (mental dimension); difficulties establishing friends or working with others (social dimension); feelings of isolation and not feeling part of something greater than themselves (spiritual dimension); and not reintegrating back into a normal family lifestyle (family dimension). CSF is intended to build resilience across all five of these dimensions starting from day one in a Soldier's, DA civilian's, or family member's service and continuing as a lifelong process throughout their military service.

The CSF program is not a new name for an existing program or initiative; it is not something we do after a critical event during a deployment; and it is not a new method to screen Soldiers for physical or psychological issues. Likewise, CSF is





neither a substitute nor a replacement for the need for good small-unit leadership.

CSF is a holistic program aimed at comprehensively equipping and training our Soldiers, family members, and Army civilians to maximize their potential and face the physical and psychological challenges of sustained operations. CSF is a prevention program that enhances resilience and coping skills, and enables individuals to grow and thrive in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity.

The CSF program consists of four pillars: the Global Assessment Tool, Comprehensive Resilience Modules, Master Resilience Trainers, and initiatives to include this education in all levels of professional military education for Soldiers and DA civilians. Each of these four pillars requires varying degrees of individual and leader involvement to successfully institutionalize CSF within the Army culture. We want CSF activities to become a part of our daily lives just as we do physical training every day to build and strengthen the physical dimension of CSF.

The first two pillars of the CSF program target every individual. The pillars are self-initiated and are confidential to eliminate

stigma surrounding an individual's performance. The third and fourth pillars focus on providing to commanders the subject-matter experts they need within their organizations and provide education to all individuals during PME throughout their career.



The CSF program begins with the GAT. When a Master Fitness Trainer or personal trainer in the fitness center sets out to develop a personalized fitness program for a new client, the development of a workout program must begin with an assessment of the

client's current strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, the GAT provides every individual with a confidential and personalized assessment of their strengths and weaknesses in the other four dimensions of fitness: emotional, social, spiritual and family. The GAT provides every individual with an understanding and road map of how to begin building strength and resiliency in these four dimensions.

The GAT includes 105 questions and takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Individual results are completely private and are neither reported nor made available to the chain of command or responsible leadership. Commanders do receive unit participation results so they can monitor completion and align training programs. The GAT is mandatory for Soldiers and voluntary for family members and DA civilians.

We want all new Soldiers joining the Army to take the GAT

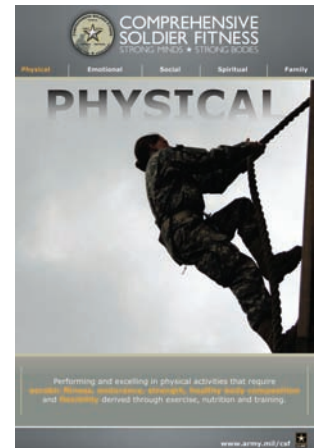
during their Initial Entry Training. Just as we begin physical training assessments on day one in the Army, we want new Soldiers to assess their weaknesses and seek out self-development modules to build strength and resilience in all dimensions of fitness.

Soldiers in the Army will take the GAT annually throughout their career. In addition to the annual requirement, Soldiers will take the GAT between 80-120 days post-deployment. Revisiting the GAT allows Soldiers to maintain a level of awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, especially if there is a change towards the negative in any specific area. Soldiers, DA civilians and family members can access the GAT at [www.sft.army.mil](http://www.sft.army.mil).

The second pillar of the CSF program is the Comprehensive Resilience Modules, which are short, web-based training packages designed to develop a particular skill associated with CSF. Just as the GAT provides the individual assessment of strengths and weaknesses, the CRMs now provide the individual a self-paced means to strengthen and build resiliency in the dimensions needing the most improvement. Based on the strengths and weaknesses of every individual, training is tailored based on the individual's performance level.

The CRMs will be mandatory for Soldiers in the months ahead and voluntary for family members and DA civilians. Presently, the number of available modules is limited, but this capability will continue to grow in the weeks and months ahead. Additionally, because the CRMs are Web-based, they provide the Army a means to rapidly update the content as we learn new and more innovative methods to build resilience and strength in each dimension.

The third pillar is the Master Resilience Trainers who will serve commanders as their subject-matter experts for teaching and developing CSF initiatives within the unit. The MRT is the core of the CSF program and we must get this right. The MRT is the master gunner or master fitness trainer of the CSF dimensions. It is critical for unit success that the right individuals are selected to attend the 10-day course at the University of Pennsylvania, or the Training and Doctrine Command MRT course when initiated at Fort Jackson, S.C. The qualifications for an MRT include staff sergeant to command sergeant major, chief warrant officer two to chief warrant officer five, captain to lieutenant colonel, and GS-9 to GS-15. All individuals selected to attend training must be in good standing



**Continued on next page**

## Continued from Page 3

within their units, and have no flags or pending disciplinary action.

As an additional duty, all individuals should hold a duty position that allows them to periodically provide training to Soldiers and families, and advise the commander on the unit's CSF program. The focus of the MRT course is to develop leaders based on the qualification criteria above, to teach CSF and train other leaders and members within an organization. Therefore, an individual selected to attend this course must already possess good communication skills, and have an outgoing personality that can connect with an audience of Soldiers, DA civilians or family members. Leaders selecting individuals to attend the MRT course should look for the following recommended competencies:

- **Self-Awareness:** Has the ability to identify thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and patterns in thinking of individuals
- **Self-Regulation:** Has the ability to control impulses, emotions and behaviors in order to achieve goals
- **Optimism:** Has the ability to look for what is good, remains realistic, maintains hope and has the ability to instill confidence in self and others
- **Mental Agility:** Has the critical thinking skills to visualize and understand attitudes and other perspectives
- **Strength of Character:** Has the ability to capitalize on individual strengths and utilizes them to achieve and meet mission objectives and goals
- **Connections:** Demonstrates the ability to have strong relationships, positive and effective communication, demonstrates empathy, and demonstrates a willingness to ask for help and help those they lead

Upon completing the selection criteria noted above, an MRT upon return to their unit must;

- *Live* the skills they learned in the MRT course
- *Use* the skills they learned in the MRT course during formal and informal counseling
- *Teach* the skills they learned in the MRT course:
  - Periodically provides the unit with structured CSF classes identified by commanders on unit training schedules
  - Integrates CSF concepts into training events whenever able
  - Provides deployment-specific CSF classes as needed by the commander in preparation for a unit deployment
  - As needed, educates leaders, Soldiers, DA civilians and their families about the CSF program
- *Serve* as the Commander's principal advisor for total fitness and resilience training.
- *Know* when to recommend referral of Soldiers for professional counseling with behavioral health providers, chaplains or other appropriate resources



Unit leaders who select the very best individuals to attend the MRT course in return will receive the very best education and training for their unit members, and an advisor to the commander who knows how to best improve the resiliency and strength of their organization. The MRT skills provided to the command upon return focus on identifying and developing strengths in individuals and groups, sustaining the levels of strength and resilience in an organization preparing for a deployment cycle and enhancing the strengths of all individuals across the organization.

The immediate population density for the development of the MRT across the Army is one per battalion by the end of FY 10. The allocation of seats is presently controlled and focused on those units getting ready to deploy; therefore, leaders must select wisely those they send to this course.

The fourth pillar focuses on institutionalizing CSF training across the Army by incorporating this education into all phases of PME for Soldiers and DA civilians. From Initial Entry Training, which includes Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training, Soldiers will receive resilience and strength training across all five dimensions, incorporated into all types and phases of training and education. Each phase or level of PME for Soldiers will include strength and resilience training integrated throughout and, where applicable, in each curriculum or program of instruction. TRADOC will tailor the course materials to the level of professional development that the particular course targets. For example; a specialist attending the Warrior Leader Course learning how to serve as a team leader needs a different level of focus in CSF, than the staff sergeant or sergeant first class attending the Senior Leader Course. While CSF focuses on building strength and resilience of the individual from day one in the Army, Soldiers serving in positions of increased responsibility need the education to lead their respective formations, including the application of CSF across the populations of Soldiers, DA civilians and families they supervise and are responsible for.

The CSF program is rapidly becoming a part of our Army culture; it is part of what we do every day as Soldiers and leaders. Just as we frequently perform physical training to strengthen our bodies, we must frequently work to strengthen our minds and outlook on life in the other four dimensions of fitness. All of us serving in leadership positions must commit ourselves to study and understand the principles, the dimensions and the pillars that comprise this program. Only then can a leader effectively “live” the principles each day by our own example, and teach our junior leaders and Soldiers “what right looks like.”

*Kenneth O. Preston*

13th Sergeant Major of the Army



# Triple Nickles' legacy honored

Army News Service →

In a standing-room-only ceremony at the Pentagon March 25, the Army paid tribute to the three surviving members of the original 17-member African-American “test platoon” of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

The commemoration of African American History Month had been slated for February but was postponed due to blizzard-like conditions in the national capital area. But on this spring day, there was no holding back of friends, families and fellow paratroopers who wanted to get autographs and have their photos taken with the country’s first African-American paratroopers.

“I thought the ceremony was really wonderful and most appropriate,” said Roger S. Walden, 88, who was a sergeant with the unit. “It was truly something. There are three of us left today from the black test platoon, so it’s really something to be honored by this.”

Created in December 1943, the 555th was nicknamed the “Triple Nickles” (using a spelling derived from Old English). It was part of the 92nd Infantry Division of Buffalo Soldiers. Even though the men who volunteered for the first company at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., were already airborne-qualified, they still had to use “colored” toilets and drinking fountains at railroad stations and sit in segregated areas in theaters.

In November 1944, the company moved to Camp Mackall, N.C., where it was reorganized and re-designated as Company A of the newly-activated 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion.

While the battalion didn’t serve overseas during World War



Photo by D. Myles Cullen

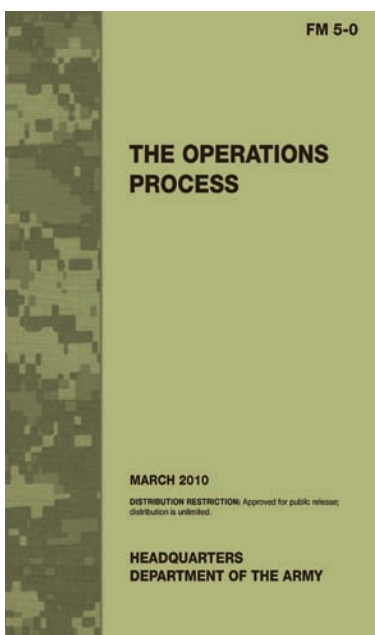
Gen. George W. Casey Jr., chief of staff of the Army, talks with Roger Walden, one of three surviving “Triple Nickles,” during a ceremony at the Pentagon March 25.

II, it deployed in May 1945 to the west coast of the United States to combat forest fires ignited by Japanese balloons carrying incendiary bombs.

Though a serious threat didn’t materialize, the paratroopers, wearing football helmets with faceguards, participated in firefighting missions throughout the Pacific Northwest during the summer and fall of 1945. Following the war, the 555th was transferred to Fort Bragg, N.C., until it was inactivated in December 1947, with most of its personnel being reassigned to the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Clarence H. Beavers, one of the original 555th paratroopers who enlisted in 1943 and stayed with the unit through 1945, said he thought while long overdue, the recognition was “pretty amazing, and I and my family appreciate the recognition.”

## Operations Process manual released



The Army in March released FM 5-0, *The Operations Process*, its keystone doctrine on the exercise of command and control in full spectrum operations.

No longer devoted exclusively to planning and orders production, FM 5-0 provides doctrine on how commanders and staff conduct all the activities of the operations process—planning, preparing, executing and assessing. The manual focuses on how commanders drive the operations process using battle command.

Additionally, FM 5-0 provides a methodology to

assist commanders, staffs and others in understanding complex, ill-structured problems and ways to develop approaches to solve or manage those problems. Collectively, this approach is referred to as “design.” As such, FM 5-0 provides a guide for cultivating adaptive and creative leadership and approaches to solving problems in ever-changing operational environments.

Lessons learned from ongoing operations, the transformation to the modular force and recent revisions to capstone and keystone joint and Army doctrine all required major revisions to the current FM 5-0.

Of the many lessons learned since 2001, a critical need to improve the Army’s ability to exercise the cognitive aspects of command and control stood out.

A significant effort is underway to educate the Army concerning the new FM 5-0. The writing team will conduct education seminars with various schools, centers and operational units. In addition, an interactive study guide will be available on FM 5-0. The Army is currently revising FM 6-0, *Mission Command*, that will expand many concepts addressed in the new FM 5-0.



## First T-11 Basic Airborne Course students graduate



Photo by Eve Meinhardt, The Paraglide; inset photo by Tiffany Nabors, The Bayonet

Above: The first group of U.S. Army Airborne School students to use the new T-11 Advanced Tactical Parachute System graduated in March. Inset: The first jumper on the chalk gives the one-minute warning to other students.

### The Bayonet

By the time 2nd Lt. Charles Lesperance, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, handed his static line to the jumpmaster for his first airborne jump in March, his nervous anticipation had faded.

“When I sat down on the plane, the nervousness disappeared because I knew I was about to do it,” he said, adding that moment gave weight to each of the 10 days of Airborne training.

After sounding off the one-minute warning to jumpers behind him, Lesperance stepped out of the aircraft and drifted 1,250 feet onto the Fryar Field drop zone at Fort Benning, Ga.

Chosen by lottery, he was the first

Read *NCO Journal* reporter Linda Crippen’s expanded coverage of the T-11 parachute in the December 2009 issue at <https://usasma.bliss.army.mil/NCOJournal/Dec09issue.pdf>

U.S. Army Airborne School student to exit with a T-11 parachute.

“It was exhilarating,” Lesperance said. “There’s nothing like it.”

Lesperance was one of 361 students in C Company, 1st Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment who graduated in March and became the first student to jump with the new parachute system.

“It’s absolutely the biggest thing that has happened at the U.S. Army Airborne School in over 50 years,” said Lt. Col. Jon Ring, battalion commander.

Ring said the cadre has already been jumping with the T-11.

“Ever since then, we’ve been re-writing and relearning classes, building proficiency and confidence in the system,” he said.

But that process was not apparent to students like Lesperance.

“The trainers have it down,” he said. “They know exactly what to do to get the students prepared for the first jump.”

Students must complete five jumps, including one T-11 jump, to graduate during the final week of Airborne School.

## CID warns of online romance scams

### U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command

Special agents from the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command are warning the American public to be vigilant of Internet scams and impersonation fraud — especially those promising true love but only end up breaking hearts and bank accounts.

According to Army officials, CID is receiving frequent reports of various scams involving persons pretending to be U.S. Soldiers who get romantically involved on the Internet with female victims and prey on their emotions and patriotism.

“We are seeing a number of scams being perpetrated on the Internet, especially on social, dating-type Web sites where females are the main target,” said Chris Grey, CID’s spokesman.

The criminals are pretending to be U.S. servicemen, routinely claiming they are serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. The perpetra-

tors will often take the true rank and name of a Soldier who is serving his country somewhere in the world, and marry that up with photographs of the Soldier they find on the Internet.

The scams often involve requests for the victim to send money so the alleged Soldier can purchase special laptop computers, international telephones or pay transportation fees in order for their fictitious relationship to continue. They often request thousands of dollars be sent to a third-party address.

Army CID is warning people to be very suspicious if they begin a relationship on the Internet with someone claiming to be an American Soldier and if, within a matter of weeks, the alleged Soldier asks for money or marriage.

To report theft to the Federal Trade Commission, call 1-877-438-4338 or online at [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft). You may also contact the CID at [www.cid.army.mil](http://www.cid.army.mil).



# Non-chargeable recuperation leave approved

## American Forces Press Service →

Some deployed service members will not be charged for rest and recuperation leave under a new Defense Department policy.

The policy allows Soldiers in designated areas to go on rest and recuperation leave without charge to their leave accounts.

“So in a sense, it is an administrative absence up to 15 days,” said Sam Retherford, the Defense Department’s director of officer and enlisted personnel management.

In the past, the leave was charged to service members’ accounts, though travel time from the theater to the airport closest to their destinations was not charged.

The non-chargeable rest and recuperation leave program will be limited to the “most arduous” areas, and the combatant commander must recommend it through

the Joint Staff for approval by the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, Retherford said.

To qualify for the program, members must be serving in a leave-restricted area, where no dependents are allowed, or in areas where travel in and out of the country is restricted. They must also be receiving hostile-fire pay.

“Two additional areas are that the duty has to be extremely arduous and the command has to foresee continuing combat operations,” Retherford said.

The benefit will take effect once an area is designated by the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. It will not apply retroactively.

The Army identified the need as especially important for junior service members, Retherford said, because they typically do not have a large amount of leave accumulated.

“At the end of their deployment, there is very little in their leave accounts for rest, recuperation and reintegration into the family and community,” he said.

“So this program means they will not be charged for the R&R leave, and they will have that leave upon redeployment,” he added.

Service members already in Iraq and Afghanistan who qualify to participate in the R&R program will qualify for the non-chargeable program.

The areas that qualify for the program have to be re-designated every two years.

Due to the requirement for combat operations in a presidentially designated combat zone, the non-chargeable rest and recuperation program should be limited to U.S. Central Command, officials said.

About 1 million service members have participated in CENTCOM’s rest and recuperation program.

## Reserve to cut forces

### Army News Service →

The Army Reserve is looking to reduce the number of Soldiers it has and ensure it has the right number of Soldiers in the right jobs.

“We have a little bit of balancing to do — we’re a little top-heavy,” said Brig. Gen. Leslie A. Purser, deputy chief, Army Reserve.

The current force strength for the Reserve is more than 207,000. The authorization for the Reserve is 205,000.

The Reserve is looking to drop Soldiers who aren’t participating as much as they should — particularly those who don’t show up for duty when asked to. The Army Reserve has 12,000 unsatisfactory participants, she said.

Purser said those Reserve Soldiers who aren’t showing up for drill may find themselves separated under “other than honorable” conditions instead of transferred into the Individual Ready Reserve, as in the past.

Additionally, Soldiers who are doing Active-Duty Operational Support tours for longer than a year may be transferred to the IRR. Purser said some commanders are transferring those Soldiers sooner than a year. Also, Soldiers with insufficient time to deploy may also be separated before their date of separation, Purser said.

The general said the Reserve has some changes to make in the “shape” of the force — which means ensuring the right number of Soldiers is in the right rank and skill level.

## Changes to ‘Don’t ask’

### Army News Service →

Pending a congressional decision on the military’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law, the secretary of defense in March implemented changes to current regulations to ensure a “fairer and more appropriate” enforcement of the law.

The changes alter how military separation investigations are conducted and what information is considered “credible” in homosexual conduct discharges. For example, information given to lawyers, clergy, psychotherapists or medical professionals in confidence will not be used.

The military will also be more cautious in examining facts before initiating an inquiry, taking into consideration that hearsay or falsified information could be presented by someone who wants to harm a Soldier. Investigators will require accusations made by third parties to be given under oath and will ignore most anonymous complaints.

The new changes also raise the rank of officers who are authorized to initiate fact-finding inquiries or separation proceedings to flag officers.

The revisions apply to all open and future cases and to all branches of the military.

Passed in 1993, the law allows homosexual Soldiers to stay in the military as long as they hide their sexual orientation. President Obama urged Congress to repeal the law in his January State of the Union address.

Last year, 428 service members were discharged from the military under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law.



# SEEKING THE BEST



29 two-partner teams compete over 53 grueling hours to find out who are the Army's toughest and smartest combat engineers

**STORY & PHOTOS BY MICHAEL L. LEWIS**

**D**ripping with sweat, even though the early morning temperature was 50 degrees, two Soldiers dragged their wounded comrade under a crisscross of knee-high barbed wire and up to a bolted door. Though clearly exhausted, they had no time to lose; precious seconds ticked away as they slammed the steel door with their battering ram. Finally the door gave way, only to reveal yet another obstacle: a window that was the only way out.

For sappers like them, it was just another day's work. But here, they were under the watchful eye of their profession's best in only the fourth hour of the 2010 Best Sapper Competition at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., last month. The manual breach course through which the team was carrying its 180-pound dummy was one of more than two dozen events spread across 53 continuous hours and 42 grueling miles — all designed to test each team's strength, smarts, stamina and sanity.

In its sixth year, the competition drew 29 two-man teams of combat engineers from across the Army to the home of engineers. There, in the heart of the Ozarks,

Left: A Sapper Leader Course cadre member supervises Sgt. 1st Class Nathaniel Day and Sgt. Tony Doss of the 489th Engineer Battalion, Camp Robinson, Ark., as they prepare two field expedient charges during the 2010 Best Sapper Competition at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., in April.

Right: Staff Sgt. Jess Maney of the 951st Sapper Company, Wisconsin National Guard, peers around a wall as he traverses the urban challenge course on Day 2.

cadre from the Sapper Leader Course — the punishing month-long program in which Soldiers earn the coveted Sapper tab — observed expectantly as each duo proved their mettle and knowledge of sapper know-how.

“The competition gets compared to Best Ranger, and it is similar from the outside looking in: three days and very little sleep,” said Staff Sgt. Corey Wilkens, the NCO in charge of the event. “But, this competition incorporates a lot more academics than just brute strength. They have to think. There’s a lot of technical information that if they don’t know, they are not going to do well.

“You have to be smart *and* strong,” he said. “To us, the Best Sapper isn’t just the person who can run the farthest, lift the most and continue on for three days. In order to coin yourself ‘Best Sapper,’ we know that you’ve got it upstairs and in your heart, and overall, you’re one physically fit team.”

The competition is essentially a concentrated form of the Sapper Leader Course, said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Wells, the engineer regimental command sergeant major. “It’s got a lot of basic combat engineering skills that they must display proficiency in. Demolitions are a big part of it; going over, around or through obstacles is another. So, you need to know your knots and lashings; you need to know how to make a bridge out of a piece of rope.”

The contest is made to be much more challenging than what Sapper School students experience, Wilkens said.

“Every year, we’ve made it just a little bit harder. Like this year, there were many times when I said, ‘Wow. Do we really need to do that? Isn’t it hard enough already?’ And, there was always somebody who said, ‘Yes. This is Best Sapper.’ Roger that. If we don’t, then it’s just a





Above: Spc. Daniel Moe of the 511th Engineer Company, Fort Campbell, Ky., eyes a target through his compass during Day 2 of the competition. He and his partner were calculating the width of a chasm.

Right: Sgt. David Bauman of the 951st Sapper Company, Wisconsin National Guard, forces open a door on the manual breach course.



Opposite page, top: Spc. Jonathan Hall of the 5th Engineer Battalion, Fort Leonard Wood, climbs across a rope while his partner, 1st Lt. Christine Murray of the 1st Engineer Brigade, follows behind him on the physical endurance course.

Opposite page, bottom: A Sapper Leader Course cadre member observes as Doss and Day construct a charge to be transported and detonated remotely by the Talon robot.

sapper competition instead of *the Best Sapper*.”

Competitors arrived from far and wide — some sporting Sapper tabs, some not — and included a number of notable participants: the first teams from the reserves and National Guard, the first private first class to compete in just his eighth month in the Army, a specialist who volunteered two days before the competition to replace his former platoon leader’s sick partner, and the first team to be sent from downrange, a pair of sergeants from Iraq.

“I did this before; I competed last year and, physically, I’d never been challenged as hard as I was last year. I’d never before had to stop a road march because my feet wouldn’t let me,” said Sgt. Wesley Shields of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Forward Operating Base Echo, Al Diwanayah, Iraq.

To train, he and his partner, Sgt. Joshua Hanks, spent a month doing two

ruck marches a week to condition their feet. “In the evenings, we tried to focus on the mental aspects — knots, first aid, weapons assembly.”

“I’ve been trying to pick his brain and have asked him so many questions, I feel like I was here last year,” Hanks said.

Of the 29 teams, 12 had at least one enlisted member, including six all-NCO teams. One such pairing hoped their participation would be an inspiration to their Soldiers back home.

“They asked us, ‘Why are you doing this? Why are you putting yourselves through that?’” said Sgt. Daniel Moreno of the 11th Engineer Battalion at Fort Benning, Ga.

“For us NCOs, we’re just trying to lead by example and show our Soldiers this is something they can do, something to strive for,” said Moreno’s partner, Staff Sgt. Steve Herman.

The competition kicked off at 0300 on Day 1 with a non-standard physical train-

ing test, in which teammates tag-teamed each exercise to do as many as possible in five minutes. “We also do pull-ups, but as many pull-ups as you can do,” explained Capt. Douglas Solan, the Sapper Leader Course company commander, who used to teach at the school as an NCO earlier in his career. “We do a run, but let’s do it in full combat gear,” he added, stressing the extreme conditions his instructors built into the competition.

After the arduous workout, the depleted competitors had yet to begin the day-long circuit, a nine-station round robin event that spanned Fort Leonard Wood’s cantonment area. Teams had to road march from station to station with their 65-pound pack — all the specialized equipment a sapper would need to carry — while being timed to ensure a sense of urgency.

On that first day, teams showcased their knowledge of knots and steel-cutting charges; ran, jumped, crawled, climbed and splashed their way through a physical



endurance course; assembled and disassembled a small arsenal of foreign and domestic weapons; remotely identified and destroyed a suspected improvised explosive device using a Talon robot; carefully located and identified a collection of buried mines in the world's most dangerous sandbox; and powered their way over, under and through a series of obstacles while transporting a wounded comrade — the 180-pound dummy.

“All we’re doing with this competition is taking what sappers do day-in and day-out and compressing as many things as we can into three days. But, generally speaking, we do this type of stuff as our

job and there’s a lot of people who don’t know that,” Wilkens said. “A misused sapper downrange is a crime. They’re so versatile and so able to help you in so many ways — people should know our capabilities.”

As dusk descended after the round robin event, there was no rest for the weary as the road march was about to begin. “It’s not just any road march,” Solan said. “This is Missouri and we’re here to test sappers. So, we put them on the most rugged piece of terrain that we could find at Fort Leonard Wood, and it really broke some teams off.”

The number of teams was narrowed

to 20 after that, and competitors were allowed only a few moments of rest before being transported to the next event at sunrise, where they constructed a watertight raft for their gear out of their ponchos, some cord and a few carabiners. Then, the teams helo-casted out of a hovering CH-47 Chinook into a fog-shrouded lake before swimming to shore, their bobbing gear in tow.

Thus began the competition’s signature event, the Sapper Stakes. After navigating a mock Middle Eastern street scene while being shot at by insurgents with live man-marker rounds, teams were tested on reflexive-fire and room-clearance techniques; rappelled down a 90-foot cliff (usually upside-down because of the weight of their packs) to calculate the width of the chasm below; constructed and detonated a makeshift Claymore mine and grapeshot charge out of a soap dish, coffee can, remnants from a hardware store and blocks of plastic explosives; and demonstrated their finesse with explosives in the MOUT course.

“One of the biggest things sappers do these days is military operations in urban terrain,” Solan explained. “It’s not about how much we can blow up; anybody can take a piece of C-4 and just blow up something and destroy it. A sapper needs to know how to blow up something without completely destroying it or harming people inside, because sometimes, we’ve got to get inside a building but don’t need



Above: A Sapper Leader Course cadre member watches as partners Capt. Kyle Moore, left, and Sgt. Ronald Camp saw through a log during the final event, the X-Mile Run.



Left: Sgt. Michael Beattie of the 511th Engineer Company, Fort Campbell, reassembles an AK-47 during a timed exam.

essarily want to kill or hurt anyone.”

As the event stretched into the evening, teams readied themselves for the penultimate challenge, the land navigation course from hell, which began under the cover of darkness just before midnight.

“I’m pretty proud to say that our land navigation course has always been one of the hardest,” Solan said. “We have special forces guys come here all the time and they’re challenged by our *regular* land nav course. For the Best Sapper Competition,

you know we’re going to bust out something special.”

Indeed, of the 20 teams initially sent out, 12 found nothing in the pitch black. Only four teams found a checkpoint and returned before time expired. The event winners only managed to locate two.

After tabulating the cumulative totals, only the top 10 teams advanced to the final tortuous event, the pre-dawn X-Mile Run, so named because competitors know neither the length of the course nor what

other mystery trials the cadre will throw at them.

“That is supposed to be a surprise,” Wilkens said. “It’s a whole different level of testing. That last day is not academic at all. It’s just brute strength and adrenaline and whatever else you have left.”

This year, the course was nine miles, wending through the central athletic fields of Fort Leonard Wood. It began with a half-mile run while wearing a gas mask, then teams sawed through one log and carried another a half-mile; carried a Bangalore crate; navigated an obstacle course while carrying M15 mines; flipped a giant 380-pound tire over a ramp and wall (a task “designed by Satan himself,” one competitor quipped); pounded a fence post into the ground; assembled and disassembled a Bailey bridge; transported another dummy via a pole-less litter and carried four 40-pound “sand babies” for nearly a mile.

After all that, teams ended the compe-

Right, top: Sgt. Joshua Hanks works with his partner, Sgt. Wesley Shields, to set up a water impulse charge to breach a door in the MOUT course.

Right, bottom: Steam rises from a soaked Sgt. Chad Brannan, left, and his partner, Sgt. William Eddleman, of the 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, as they carry their makeshift poncho raft after helo-casting into and swimming across a pond.

tition similarly to the way they began on Day 1 — breaching a pair of steel doors to reach the finish line through a near-life-size replica of the engineers' castle insignia.

Basic trainees from Fort Leonard Wood and representatives from across the regiment, in town for the engineers' annual conference, lined the last steps of the route and cheered the competitors as they lurched toward the finish. After a quick, post-run medical checkup, the teams were at last allowed to rest.

The winners, Capt. Joseph Byrnes and Capt. Jason Castro of the 554th Engineer Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, said much of their success was due to the many NCOs who originally trained them to become sappers.

"I'd done this competition before with my platoon sergeant. Coming into this year's competition as a two-captain team, I realized that we're missing that NCO backbone, that base of knowledge that sapper NCOs have and have built on over years and years," said Byrnes, who as a second lieutenant won the Best Sapper Competition in 2006 with his partner, Staff Sgt. Jefferey Goodman.

Castro agreed. "We missed that piece of the puzzle. I would look at Joe sometimes, and he would look at me and say, 'Man, I just wish you were an NCO, because today you suck.' That's just the way it is. Their knowledge and their base are just irreplaceable; you just can't fake it."

As the only NCO to make it to the elite final round, Sgt. Ronald Camp of the 1st Engineer Battalion at Fort Riley, Kan., was proud to represent the NCO Corps in the top 10.

"It feels good. But I really, really wish there were more NCOs. I would like to see a lot more of us win."

He credited the close working relationship he had with his partner, Capt.




Kyle Moore, for propelling them far in the competition.

"They didn't throw anything at us that we hadn't worked on. If I didn't know it, he knew it; if he didn't know it, I knew it. If we both had a little familiarization with it, we'd put two and two together and made it work. That's the whole point of this partnership."

"I think we both hit points where we didn't think we could do any more. But, we pushed each other to do it," Moore

said. "Like before the helo-cast, we made a deal: 'I'll swim and pull the raft if you keep yourself going. But, you're going to have to drag me when we get to shore.'"

Camp and Moore were among many participants who expected to return to compete again next year. "Might as well," Moore said. "Though, right now I'm just thinking about breakfast." 

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By Cindy Ramirez

**D**ormant in their hangars, the Shadow, Hunter and Gray Eagle unmanned aircraft systems appear unassuming, quietly waiting for a remote pilot to guide them into combat.



In theater, these UAS — known as the “eyes of the Army” — are powerful tools that provide Soldiers unprecedented intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, particularly when it comes to the Global War on Terrorism.



Perhaps more importantly, Army leaders say, UAS are saving lives on the battlefield through their ability to spot ambushes, identify enemy operatives and defeat targets remotely.

One of the fastest-growing fields in the Army, UAS are in high demand across all echelons as they’re increasingly called upon to assist on the battlefield.

In fact, more than 300 Army UAS are currently in theater; they recorded their 1 millionth hour of flight in Iraq and Afghanistan this May.

“It’s limitless. There’s no ceiling here,” said Sgt. Michael Arons, a Sky

# UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS



# THE EYES OF THE ARMY

Warrior Alpha aircraft instructor at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., who has flown the UAS during his tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. “Everybody sees this as the future, so you get in on the ground floor and there’s no place to go but up.”

In April, the Army released *The Eyes of the Army: U.S. Army Roadmap for Unmanned Aircraft Systems, 2010-2035*, a first-of-its-kind document aimed to “provide a broad vision for how the Army will develop, organize and employ UAS across the full spectrum of operations.”

“Our capabilities are limited only by the imagination,” said Command Sgt. Major Danny C. Thurecht of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Training Battalion at Fort Huachuca, which conducts initial entry and military occupational specialty training for UAS operators, maintainers and leaders. The battalion executes 20 programs of instruction, and additionally

trains a number of Marine Corps and Navy personnel.

“Military intelligence and combat operations continue to evolve, to improve, as these types of programs play an increasingly important role in the way the Army and its Soldiers operate,” Thurecht said. “We’re at the heart of it all.”

Fort Huachuca served as the Army’s testing and fielding installation in the 1950s for what were then known as remotely piloted vehicles.

Later called unmanned aerial vehicles, the aircraft gained notoriety in the early 1990s when the Pioneer UAV flew more than 300 combat missions during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Once considered primarily an intelligence asset, the UAS made their home at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence at Fort Huachuca until 2003 when authority over them was transferred





Photo courtesy U.S. Army

Left: The Army's newest and most advanced unmanned aircraft system is the extended range/multi-purpose aircraft known as the Gray Eagle.

Photos by Cindy Ramirez

Below: The Hunter unmanned aircraft system sits in a hangar at the Black Tower UAS Training Center at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

Right: Staff Sgt. Bryan McGoon of the UAS Training Battalion at Fort Huachuca demonstrates a ground data terminal at the installation's Libby Army Airfield.



to the U.S. Army Unmanned Aircraft Systems Center of Excellence at Fort Rucker, Ala., a subordinate organization of the installation's U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence.

In 2001, 54 Hunter and Shadow unmanned aircraft began combat operations in Iraq. Today, the Army has more than 4,000 unmanned aircraft systems in use, with more planned for the near future, the *Roadmap* states.

Similarly, Fort Huachuca's training capabilities have grown exponentially, Thurecht said.

The post trained just 64 operators a year a decade ago, compared with 1,400 in fiscal year 2008. In fact, the *Roadmap* indicates this number will rise to more than 2,100 UAS operators, maintainers and leaders in fiscal year 2012.

The UAS field is growing so quickly that new MOS and skill identifiers in UAS

maintenance are expected to be established this summer.

The UAS growth extends to other areas, as well. For example, the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence NCO Academy at Fort Rucker is preparing to meet the needs of an influx of Soldiers with UAS MOSs who will be taking the Advanced Leader Course, the Senior Leader Course and the UAS Operator Supervisor Course, among others.

"I anticipate our footprint will grow quickly in the coming years as we continue to graduate NCOs whose skills are increasingly needed in today's and tomorrow's Army," said Command Sgt. Maj. Marlin J. Smith, the NCO Academy commandant. "UAS is an emerging capability and everyone wants a piece of it. We'll continue to play a key role in training our NCOs to become leaders in the field in an array of MOSs."

## More Than a Video Game

Remotely piloted, the unmanned aerial vehicles carry cameras, sensors, communications equipment and other payloads, and have evolved in prestige and capabilities over the years. The unmanned aircraft systems comprise the aerial vehicle, its payload and the human operator at the control station, as well as the Soldiers or other manned vehicles being supported during specific training, intelligence or combat missions.

The Shadow and Hunter systems have been part of the Army's UAS arsenal for more than a decade, providing reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition and battle damage assessment. New and improved capabilities with these systems, coupled with new aircraft being tested and fielded have helped the UAS emerge as the equipment of choice for Soldiers and leaders across all echelons.

The demand for UAS has directly translated into an increased need for personnel, so much so that this month will mark the official start of a new MOS — 15E, UAS Repairer. All 15E personnel will be qualified to maintain the Shadow, and Soldiers with an additional skill identifier of U3 will be qualified to maintain the Hunter.

A new maintainer course for the extended range/multi-purpose aircraft known as the Gray Eagle will be established in June with an additional skill identifier of U5. It's scheduled for its first fielding in July 2011 as part of the initial authorizations for UAS in combat aviation brigades.

Soldiers at Fort Huachuca have already been training on the Gray Eagle, the Army's newest and most technologically advanced division-level aerial system.

The 28-foot long aircraft — a modern version of the Predator and the Sky Warrior Alpha systems currently deployed in combat in Iraq — has a wingspan of 56 feet, a flight endurance of 30 hours and includes a payload of four Hellfire missiles.

"I don't look at it as a video game," said Staff Sgt. Raymond T. Ballance, a Sky Warrior Alpha operator who flew the UAV during his tour in Iraq and the Shadow during a tour in Korea. He is now training on the Gray Eagle.

"It's not just flying the airplane looking through a camera," Ballance said. "Having had experience in the field, I understand what those guys on the ground are going through because I've been there. "It helps me keep focused and impart what I know on my younger Joes to keep them focused when we're down rage."

## THE ROADMAP

*The Eyes of the Army: U.S. Army Roadmap for Unmanned Aircraft Systems, 2010-2035*, can be downloaded in PDF at:

<http://www.rucker.army.mil/usaace/uas/>

### Roadmap to the Future

Although the *Roadmap* document was not intended as a directive, it will be reviewed every two years to remain "relevant to operational needs, lessons learned and emerging capabilities," it states. The *Roadmap* aims to answer what UAS capabilities the Army will need in the future.

The document outlines its priority missions as security; reconnaissance and surveillance (chemical, biological, nuclear and high-yield explosives and counter-explosive hazards); and attack (close combat, interdiction attack and strike).

The *Roadmap* covers three periods:

- **Near-term** (2010-2015): Continued rapid integration of UAS into tactical organizations that meet the warfighter's current combat requirements, with intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance being the dominant capability requirement;
- **Mid-term** (2016-2025): Full integration of UAS, whose technological advances will increase autonomy and support of rapid and fluid operations; and optionally piloted vehicles and lighter-than-air vehicles will emerge to bridge the gap between manned and unmanned capabilities;
- **Far-term** (2026-2035): Drastic improvements to the commonalities and capabilities of both manned and unmanned systems.

The document also outlines the future role of UAS in full spectrum combat aviation brigades, which will "combine robotics, sensors, manned/unmanned vehicles and dismounted Soldiers."

### 'Nothing Unmanned'

Col. Christopher B. Carlile, director of Fort Rucker's UAS Center of Excellence, said although "unmanned" is the buzzword, "there's nothing 'unmanned' about these systems," adding that Soldiers, mostly noncommissioned officers, operate and maintain Army aircraft systems.



Photo by Cindy Ramirez

The extended range/multi-purpose unmanned aircraft system known as the Gray Eagle — a modern version of the Predator and Sky Warrior Alpha systems currently deployed in combat in Iraq — sits in a training hangar at the Libby Army Airfield, Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

One of the most notable aspects of the *Roadmap*, Carlile said, is that “it never waivers away from the focus on the Soldier.”

“It focuses on the efforts on our NCOs, who are the backbone of the Army and will continue to be in this UAS field. This is no longer a function strictly for warrant officers. We’ve found that our NCOs are proficient and have been properly trained, and serve a key function as we look into the future of the UAS,” Carlile said.

NCOs couldn’t agree more, and say their experiences on the ground and with the UAS give them great confidence in using the systems to accomplish a mission.


“On my first deployment, I was on the ground as a tanker, so we had some good experience with the UAV working directly for us and exponentially increasing our combat awareness,” said Staff Sgt. Eric Wheeler, a Sky Warrior Alpha instructor at Fort Huachuca who’s served two tours of duty in Iraq.

“I found it interesting and thought I could have the same impact for other guys on the field,” Wheeler said. “Working together, we accomplish the mission most effectively and with less loss of life.”

## Force Multiplier

The “force multiplier” effect — a combination of techniques that make the combat force more effective than it would be without it — is paramount to the UAS *Roadmap*’s goals.

“The UAS are a proven combat multiplier because they increase situational awareness, reduce workloads and minimize the risk to the forward-deployed Soldier,” the document states.

“The Army is doing a really good job in improving the systems in a very short period of time so that with every change, every improvement, we’re doing things better and helping our Soldiers down-range,” said Staff Sgt. Bryan McGoon, who flew the Shadow in Afghanistan and is now training on the Gray Eagle at Fort Huachuca. “It’s really impressive to be part of that.” 

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Photos by Cindy Ramirez

Top: Staff Sgt. Raymond T. Ballance, a Gray Eagle operator, demonstrates the ground control station used by unmanned aircraft system operators.

Center: UAS Training Battalion Soldiers conduct a preventative maintenance inspection of a Shadow aircraft under the watchful eye of a civilian instructor.

Bottom: Staff Sgt. Brian Morton discusses the features of a Hunter in a hangar at the Black Tower UAS training site at Fort Huachuca.

# Tracking the Learning Integration Division

## INCOPD's LID incorporates directed NCO leader development

Part four of the INCOPD series. Read the first three at <https://usasma.bliss.army.mil/NCOJournal/>.

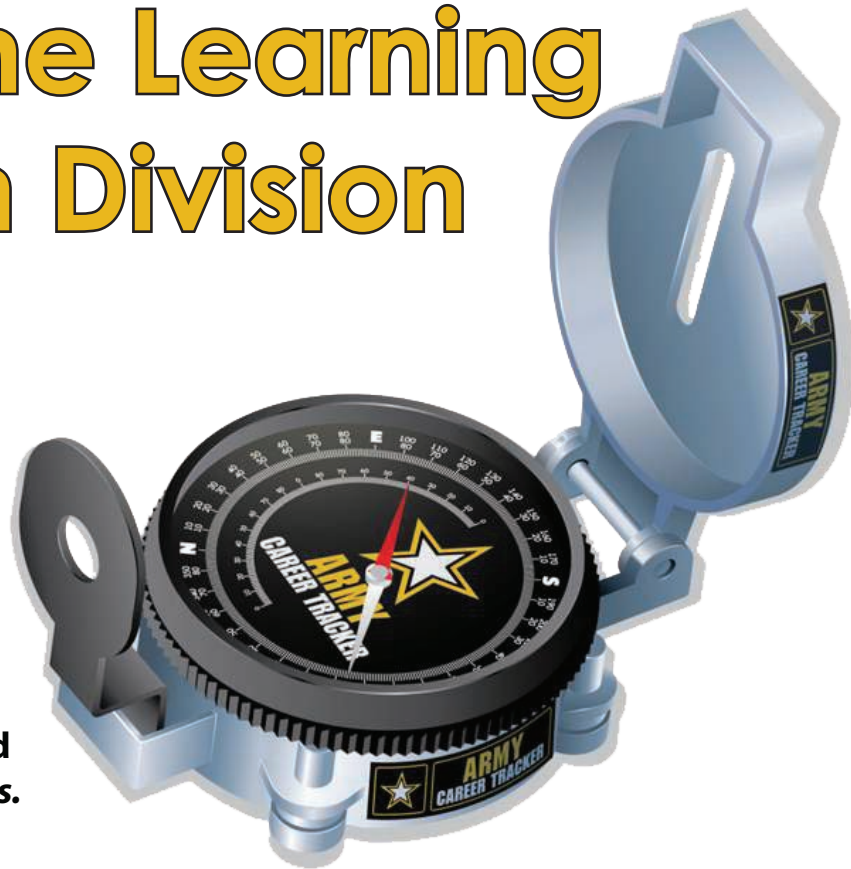
By Linda Crippen  
Graphics Courtesy INCOPD

Getting an education and keeping track of training is about to get much easier for U.S. Army Soldiers. The Learning Integration Division under the Institute for Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development, Fort Monroe, Va., is working to ensure enlisted Soldiers have the best opportunities available.

With several initiatives underway, this division focuses on incorporating new learning initiatives and supporting technologies into the current concept of INCOPD. Presently, the major taskings include the Army Career Tracker, Structured Self-Development (in conjunction with the proponent, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas), College of the American Soldier (includes Army degree programs and integrating civilian education into some programs of instruction), technical certifications for certain military training, POI evaluations by the American Council of Education and the Army Correspondence Course Program.

Jeff Colimon, LID's chief, and Sergeants Major Course Class 47 graduate, said that some of these initiatives have been in the works for almost 10 years. He describes his division as the point of entry at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command for education coordination with INCOPD. "We are always looking at new ways to infuse education within the institution," he said.

It used to be that college education was something you did on your own time, if you had time, Colimon explained. "The good old sergeant major would say, 'If you want to be a college graduate then you're at the wrong place.' I remember those days,



but now, you'll find that the mindset has changed drastically. We want educated Soldiers in the Army," he said. LID's programs tend to foster an environment that encourages Soldiers to further their education. "It's a win-win."

As what prompted the transformation within the NCO Education System in general, the Army's Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) study indicated the necessity for these initiatives. "The College of the American Soldier and the Army Career Tracker are results from the RETAL study. We are merely the integrators and implementers of what the Soldiers are saying is useful to them, the gaps that they perceive," Colimon said, explaining that LID's job is to try to resolve the gaps. "Education for the Soldiers is a big issue now, and off-duty education may not provide a glide path for a lot of Soldiers. [Studying during off-duty] does not always provide many opportunities, so we're trying to change the rules of engagement to see if we can infuse additional educational opportunities," he added.

### Structured Self-Development

While LID is the lead for Structured Self-Development, they work closely with USASMA for implementation. The collaborative efforts include courseware and content as well as the policies regarding implementation, for example, whether it would provide promotion points and fulfill pre-requisites for attendance to professional military educational training.

"Prior to two years ago, the Army had institutional training, unit training and self-development," explained Peter Kakel, LID's training initiatives analyst. "Recently, self-development

was divided into three different levels: structured (meaning mandatory), guided (suggested), personal (completely on your own). This office is trying to focus on the structured and guided pieces,” he said.

SSD-1 was initially introduced Armywide in January, and the program is still undergoing tweaks. Overall, there are five levels of training in the SSD program that span a Soldier’s entire career, from post-basic training to post-graduation from the Sergeants Major Course. The Web-based training is mandated according to a Soldier’s rank. For example, SSD-1 will prepare Soldiers to attend the Warrior Leader Course. Subsequent levels will prepare NCOs for each progressive step in their military career, totaling approximately 400 hours of self-development studies.

Additionally, Colimon said that it is necessary to “build some rules of engagement for SSD.” It is imperative that the system is a secure environment, especially considering the value it offers in the form of promotion points. “We’re working with USASMA to provide resources to assist them in building a test instrument for SSD,” he said. These measures will help prevent problems with potential cheating.

### College of the American Soldier

According to division information, the focus of this initiative is to “redefine learning as a dynamic construct that incorporates both training and education.” So, what’s the difference between training and education? The answer depends upon whom you ask.

USASMA commandant Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Chandler and academy staff describe training as being what Soldiers do to prepare for elements that are known. Alternatively, education prepares them for dealing with the unknown.

Training Soldiers is at the core of what NCOs do, Chandler said. “But when you get into education, understanding experiences — that is a new and higher level of learning than what we’re used to,” he said.

And as Colimon suggested too, today’s Army needs educated Soldiers; the Army needs adaptive thinkers and problem solvers. Programs like College of the American Soldier will help enable NCOs to achieve a degree within their first four-year enlistment, if Soldiers elect to pursue it.

Dianne Moses, a senior training analyst and retired NCO, is in charge of the Career NCO Degree Program with LID, and one of her biggest goals is to infuse college courses into military schools.

College of the American Soldier was initially created in 2007 to help Soldiers in the maneuver and fires fields complete degree programs despite multiple deployments and frequent moving. As the past few years have shown, almost any military occupational specialty will deploy at some point, making CAS an ideal program for

most Soldiers Armywide.

Currently, about 10 colleges and universities participate with CAS. The program also operates in collaboration with the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges program, which includes more schools. “CAS is constantly looking to expand its program to support advanced leadership development and provide additional degree options to Soldiers,” Moses said. She added that soon, college credits may also be earned through other military training such as the Army Correspondence Course Program.

CAS staff is working toward instituting the Career NCO Degree Program, which will provide flexibility in completing a degree while serving on active duty. “The program will offer broad degree options in the business and management-related fields that are not tied to any specific MOS,” Moses explained. Furthermore, the program intends to “maximize transferability of credits between colleges, offer credit for military training and education as well as minimize residency requirements so Soldiers can earn degrees within a reasonable amount of time,” she added.

### Army Correspondence Course Program

Underwater basket weaving will no longer be offered through the Army Correspondence Course Program, so say goodbye to the legendary “free” giveaway promotion points. Waiting for the big packet and booklet to arrive by mail — also gone. Getting the answers from a friend who took underwater basket weaving last month so you can breeze through the course — over. Value added by implementing higher standards for a more meaningful program — priceless.

LID staff explained that ACCP is being reorganized, and the improvements are noticeable. “In the past, Interim Learning Management System hosted the program out of Fort Eustis, Va.; however, it will be migrated to the Army Learning Management System,” Kakel said. Having worked for TRADOC’s Quality Assurance Office for six years, Kakel understands the necessity for upgrading the ACCP.

“During this migration, we’ve sent all courses to the proponents for their review, and the review eliminated over 600 subcourses,” he said. To date, LID has managed to whittle down the courses and sub-courses from almost 1,300 to 480. One of the main objectives in the transformation is to offer material that is relevant to today’s operational environment and Soldiers’ career fields.

For the most part, the program is being retrofitted to make it more secure, part of which will transfer from a hard-copy, snail-mail system to an online, automated program. This aspect alone will help make it a much more secure environment. Of course, peripheral materials may still be mailed to students, if necessary.

Kakel said that of the 480 courses



For more information about CAS or the Career NCO Degree Program log on to [https://www.goarmyed.com/public/public\\_cas.aspx](https://www.goarmyed.com/public/public_cas.aspx).

remaining, LID has contracted through IBM to help develop secure test instruments. “We’re developing test questions to get maybe three questions [or question prompts] for each enabling learning objective,” he said. Until now, there was only one answer sheet, making it easy for users to use the buddy system and offer their answer sheets to each other. The online item banks will draw questions and answers randomly. Furthermore, users will need their Common Access Card in order to take a test.

Colimon added that through CAC authentication and using secure test instruments, cheating will become too laborious; it would be much easier to just read the material and take the test in an honest manner. Of course, where there’s a will to cheat, there’s a way to cheat, but it will take considerable efforts to do so. Upon logging in, users’ first notification will be that cheating is against Army values.

“We have instituted some additional rules of engagement, where you can only be enrolled in so many courses, and there’s a waiting period after taking a test if re-testing is needed. We are scanning the database to see who is accumulating [a large] number of hours within a limited time. All of this is to make the program more meaningful,” Colimon said. “We will break the paradigms.”

Aside from making the program more meaningful, these refinements are all efforts to allow Soldiers to earn college credit hours for some of the correspondence courses. LID has proposed changes that would require Soldiers

to first take courses that relate to their job field. Once they have completed those courses, they may then take others outside of their field. These proposed changes are currently under review for possible implementation; however, if the changes were to take effect, then choosing an ACCP course might no longer be based solely on potential promotion points.

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Path 1: Lacking Personalized Leader Guidance, Unable to track professional goals, Missed College Opportunities, No visibility on Career Path, Lack of NCOES

Path 2: Welcome to Basic Training, Structured Self-Development, MOS Training, NCOES, Functional Courses, Professional Military Education, SOCAD/College American Soldier

Path 3: Duplication of College Credits, Lack of Mentorship, Undefined Career Path, Delayed attendance at NCOES

**Army Career Tracker (ACT)** is the leadership development compass that will guide you from Basic Training to the Sergeants Major Academy. ACT will consolidate and organize data from the Army's existing training, education, and experiential learning systems into a single, interactive, and easy to use portal. ACT will enable Enlisted Soldiers, Officers, Civilians and their Leaders to view a common training picture and act on the information. For questions contact the ACT Team at [act.now@us.army.mil](mailto:act.now@us.army.mil)

*ACT is Coming Soon...ACT Now!*

For more information about ACCP, contact Peter Kakel at (757) 788-5678 or [peter.kakel@us.army.mil](mailto:peter.kakel@us.army.mil). To access ACCP courses available through distance learning, go to <http://www.atsc.army.mil/accp/aipdnew.asp>

## Army Career Tracker

The Army Career Tracker is a leadership development tool that gives Soldiers the capability to track training, education and experiential learning, according to LID training materials. ACT will change how Soldiers track their own military and professional development as well as how leaders facilitate their subordinates' professional development.

As revealed during the RETAL study, Soldiers indicated they had difficulty navigating through the plethora of information — different systems, different Web sites, different user names, passwords, etc. — just to stay on top of their own development. “They had difficulties finding the information that was relevant to them,” Colimon said.

While part of ACT's function is cataloging information, or as Colimon calls it, an “integrated search catalog that pulls information from multiple systems.” ACT is not a human resources tool. Aside from serving as a central interface for past training and education, it will be the main avenue of notification for Soldiers when they are scheduled for military training or schools. For example, when a Soldier is put on the list to attend the Warrior Leader Course, he or she will receive notice for it through ACT. The Soldier's supervisor will also see the notice.

“Our goal is to attract Soldiers and provide ease of navigation so Soldiers can understand the utility,” Colimon said, explaining that ACT will streamline information and personalize it to each Soldier, hence adding value.


ACT offers a unique feature in that supervisors will be

able to ensure their subordinates' professional development stays on track. The system will alert supervisors when Soldiers are due for certain types of training and when Soldiers have fulfilled any necessary pre-requisites for specific courses.

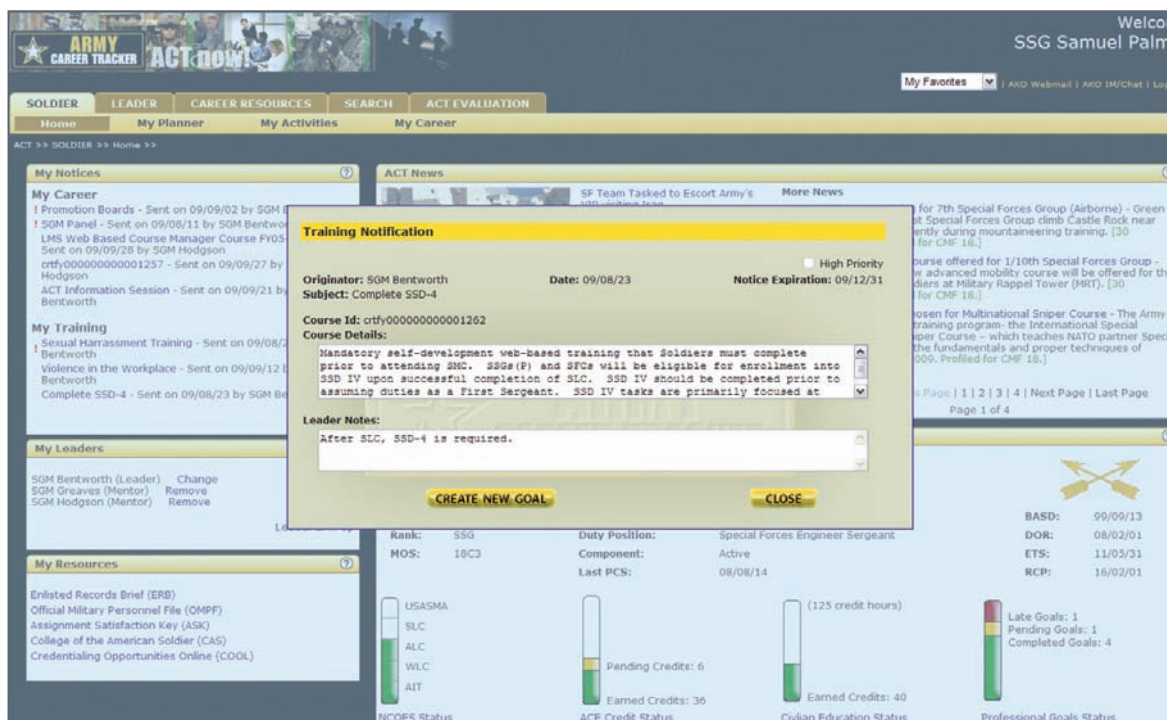
Companywide ethics training needs to be held this Friday? Very efficiently, the notification can be sent to all Soldiers through ACT. The program will revolutionize leader development within the ranks. Furthermore, ACT will allow Soldiers to take ownership of their careers like never before in the history of the Army. Soldiers will know exactly what's expected of them, when it's expected of them and what they have completed so far. Additionally, command personnel can perform talent searches using ACT.

Users will be able to see all relative information regarding their careers, and the information will prompt users to take action, for example enrolling in SSD or preparing to attend WLC. LID staff said that the information is personalized to each Soldier, and proponents can control which information is visible.

“The capabilities are great and extensive,” Colimon explained. “For example, for an 18-series [special forces] Soldier, the 18-series career management field can control the information the Soldier sees as well as ensure the proper information is disseminated based on CMF, theater, duties, etc. The profile communication is actually propagated based on the user's profile,” he said.

LID completed a demonstration of technology for ACT in November 2009, and has since built the infrastructure for the program. “We're now preparing for the full implementation, production and support for 1.35 million users,” Colimon said. According to training materials, ACT is scheduled to launch over the course of the next six years, with enlisted and officer participation beginning fiscal year 2010, Army Reserve and National Guard in FY 2011 and Army civilians in FY 2012. 

*This article is the fourth in a series detailing the mission and objectives of the divisions within INCOPD. E-mail Linda Crippen at [linda.crippen@us.army.mil](mailto:linda.crippen@us.army.mil).*



The screenshot shows the Army Career Tracker (ACT) web interface. A central pop-up window titled "Training Notification" is displayed, containing the following information:

- Originator:** SGM Bentworth
- Date:** 09/08/23
- Notice Expiration:** 09/12/31
- Subject:** Complete SSD-4
- Course ID:** crfy000000000001262
- Course Details:** Mandatory self-development web-based training that Soldiers must complete prior to attending SMC. SSGs(P) and SFCs will be eligible for enrollment into SSD IV upon successful completion of SLC. SSD IV should be completed prior to assuming duties as a First Sergeant. SSD IV tasks are primarily focused at [redacted]
- Leader Notes:** After SLC, SSD-4 is required.

Below the notification, the interface shows various sections:

- My Leaders:** Lists SGM Bentworth (Leader), SGM Greaves (Mentor), and SGM Hodgson (Mentor) with options to change or remove.
- My Resources:** Lists links for Enlisted Records Brief (ERB), Official Military Personnel File (OMPF), Assignment Satisfaction Key (ASK), College of the American Soldier (CAS), and Credentialing Opportunities Online (COOL).
- My Career:** Displays various status indicators and charts:
  - USASMA: 100%
  - SLC: 100%
  - ALC: 100%
  - WLC: 100%
  - AIT: 100%
  - Pending Credits: 6
  - Earned Credits: 36
  - Civilian Education Status: 125 credit hours
  - Earned Credits: 40
  - Professional Goals Status: 1 Late Goal, 1 Pending Goal, 1 Completed Goal

Left: Sample screen shot of a training notification Soldiers will receive through the Army Career Tracker Web site.

# It's not your daddy's Army anymore

## Mapping out changes for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Course CPX

Story and Photos  
BY LINDA CRIPPEN

This exercise is not like the game Risk played many years ago, moving forces here and there on a map or board while trying to defeat an imaginary enemy. This command post exercise, perhaps the culminating event of the entire Sergeants Major Course at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, puts future sergeants major at the helm of battalion-level operations, and higher, during simulated warfare.

Class 60 performed a unique role in conducting simulated war games using the Command Post of the Future system, which enhances situational awareness and can gather 14 different software threads from the Army Battle Command System. CPOF isn't just for simulated battle; it's the Army's lifeline in the field.

Created by General Dynamics, CPOF is marketed as an executive-level decision support system for commanders and their staff. The Windows-based system offers a multiperspective view of the battlefield as well as collaboration and information sharing at many different levels among operational and organizational entities. "Boasting 2-D and 3-D visualization, CPOF saves lives by supporting collaborations from geographically dispersed locations," according to the company's Web site.

The main objective of these exercises is to better prepare students to perform in their next assignments as sergeants major and command sergeants major. Many of them will move into operations staff positions, and being familiar with CPOF and battlefield-related processes will prove instrumental to their commanding officers.

Since the course began almost nine months ago, students have been planning and preparing for the CPX, which challenges them to employ the military decision-making process. Every phase of the exercise requires detailed planning and a detail of the MDMP. Similar to decision-making processes used in the corporate world, the military version is outlined in FM 5-0, *The Operations Process*, which explains how commanders, staffs and subordinate headquarters interact during planning.

The MDMP "is an iterative planning methodology that

integrates the activities of the commander, staff, subordinate headquarters, and other partners to understand the situation and mission; develop and compare courses of action; decide on a course of action that best accomplishes the mission; and produce an operation plan or order for execution," according to the FM. "The MDMP helps leaders apply thoroughness, clarity, sound judgment, logic, and professional knowledge to understand situations, develop options to solve problems and reach decisions. It is a process that helps commanders, staffs, and others think critically and creatively while planning."

"This is a paradigm shift within the NCO Education System," explained Efren Ordaz, associate professor for USASMA's Department of Command Leadership. "We used to do battle drills, which are based on conditions and standards." But, planning does not rely on conditioned responses since every problem is different. "Planners have a scientific approach to developing an answer to a complex problem. In the Army, we call that MDMP, just like the civilian sector calls it the decision-making process. It assesses the program that takes it from looking at the problem, decomposing the problem to different parts so that each component can 'fix' its part. From there, we do a mission analysis," he said.

Mission analysis includes examining what higher commanders want organizations and units to accomplish. At each level, "we take our piece out of it, and we develop different courses of action. We look at what the enemy is supposed to do. Then, we develop courses [of action] to cover the enemy's courses of action. That's how we fight," Ordaz said, explaining that once different courses of action are developed, the commander will choose which one to employ.

The staff is equipped with critical thinking abilities to derive a solution, but ultimately the commander makes the final decision. "We compare different courses of action to see what the commander wants in terms of speed, force ratios, conservation of the force, matching the objective — if it meets all the intent of what the commander wants then he will choose the one that fits



— or there might be a combination of various courses of action that produces a better solution,” he said.

Early on, students were exposed to the beginnings of a realistic, problematic scenario that would continue to unfold throughout the rest of course. For instance, the GAAT region (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey), as well as Russia and Iran were included in the scenario. Each student was assigned a specific area within the GAAT. They grew to be quasi-experts in political and military affairs, learning what the needs and wants were of their respective areas. Two staff group rooms — 32 students — were divided into four joint task forces.

As the course progressed, events developed within the region; all the while, students learned what interests their joint task force had there. “They had classes on the original strategy, national strategy and defense strategy. Given the tools presented in these classes, students were able to extract what they needed for each country and how best to support it. We formed a group for planning — from military to interagency to non-governmental organizations — that will go out there and have an impact on that country. Then, we coordinate with the State Department to make sure that the ambassadors are involved should we need to go in there,” Ordaz explained.

### **SIMULATION SCENARIO / MISSION**

There were some things going on in the world... Ahurastan was infringing on Azerbaijan, so Azerbaijan called for help. In prior years (the scenario buildup), coalition forces monitored their actions and interacted with them to help deter threats. Students developed a plan to defend Azerbaijan, a landlocked country, but also developed plans with surrounding countries. For example, since Georgia has a seaport, it could be a platform for

launching into Azerbaijan. Georgia, a friendly partner, gave coalition forces host ability to support Azerbaijan.

Taking about 150 days to project their buildup of corps-level forces — about 100,000 troops — the planning sequence has been underway for almost the entire course. “We give the students a complex problem, and through the critical thinking they’ve been exposed to in the primary classes here, they were able to come up with a plan,” Ordaz said. These forces comprise the Coalition Forces Land Component Command, better known as CFLCC (pronounced see-flec), which can have components from all services as well as international components. CFLCC directs all land forces on behalf of the JTF commander.

The academy students represented the land component in the simulated exercise, instructors explained. Students were tasked with the mission to defend Azerbaijan with four joint task force teams conducting their own individual planning but in simultaneously simulated exercises. The JTFs planned and carried out their missions as individual teams, but the battle simulation center was able to play out each team’s scenario simultaneously. Some teams performed very well, and some teams needed a few rotations before discovering their weaknesses, like forgetting to move air defense artillery units with the front line.

Sgt. Maj. Robert Forsyth, deputy director of the Sergeants Major Course, explained that currently, the pre-CPX phase of the course is 281 hours, with the CPX itself lasting 54 hours. The focus is staff planning, not winning a war. “This was the first time students were able to use computer-generated data and work in a staff group under pressure, under unknown reactions and counter-reactions. They were evaluated on their abilities to work in a group under those pressures, depending on the computer’s simulated results. And that’s what we were really looking for,” he said.



Class 60 students at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, discuss strategies and planning activities in the classroom for the course’s command post exercise. USASMA staff is changing and updating the CPX to teach future sergeants major operational and planning activities as well as decisive action at the battalion and brigade levels.



Members of Joint Task Force 3 assess the command battlefield situation after another cycle of simulated warfare was completed. The class took about 150 days to project their buildup of corps-level forces — about 100,000 troops — and the planning sequence has been underway for almost the entire course. These forces comprise the Coalition Forces Land Component Command, better known as CFLCC, which can include components from all services, as well as international military forces. Students were tasked with the mission to defend Azerbaijan with four joint task force teams conducting their own individual planning, but in simultaneous simulated exercises.

After the CPX, Class 60 students discussed the pros and cons of the exercise through their after-action reports. Master Sgt. Robert Todd, who will be heading to Camp Shelby, Miss., after graduation, said that all of the JTFs came up with similar points for the AARs, which “mainly focused on the CPOF operations. Going into the position of operations sergeants major, it will be advantageous to learn that process while we’re here in school and have more training on the CPOF,” he said.

Todd said that based on what the instructors say, academy staff is in the midst of revamping the exercise for Class 61 to make it more realistic. “Also, allowing task forces or command groups to move around the battlefield will be better. Most of us

have never used or trained on the CPOF, so this exercise will definitely help prepare us for our assignments,” he said.

## REASON FOR CHANGE

Command Sgt. Maj. David L. Yates, director of the Sergeants Major Course, explained that the change was pertinent since previous exercises were considered stand-alone. “There was nothing that really tied it to what students learned, and the way we do the exercise now, it’s tied to what they learn all year. Everything they learn all year, they bring it into the final event. Anything that’s in the curriculum is part of the exercise. It’s all the parts and pieces of what they learn; it’s more refined. It’s also a longer process,

Master Sgt. Robert Todd discusses Joint Task Force 2’s planning strategy with Efren Ordaz, associate professor for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy’s Leadership Development Directive. Students were presented with a developing situation, specific tasks and objectives for the command post exercise, with the main focus centering on planning, strategy and decisive action.



the military decision-making process,” he said.

The changes in the curriculum were sparked by expanded responsibilities for noncommissioned officers. Yates said that in the past, sergeants major would assume roles automatically if they were capable and experienced in a certain area, experience not necessarily learned from the academy but from past performance.

“What we want the sergeants major to take away from this — when they leave here, they’re going to go work for a lieutenant colonel or major, in some cases a full-bird colonel on a staff somewhere — they’ve got to understand the process when they get there. Those officers already do. If sergeants major don’t understand the process when they get there, they’ll be behind the curve and won’t be a contributing member of the staff,” he said.

Yates said he’s seen it happen many times that if sergeants major aren’t contributing members of the staff, they get sidelined. They get “marginalized and become glorified coffee pot watchers,” he said. The academy is now arming them to speak the same language as officers, and the experience they gather through the course and CPX will afford them the knowledge and confidence to perform in the core competency areas, he said.

Understanding the process is perhaps the most important aspect. “It’s the processes that we’re trying to teach. It’s a process that the president on down performs. It’s a process for them to understand so they can explain to their Soldiers what happened for them to be standing in the middle of that third-world country,” Yates explained.

Understanding the process can also help leaders anticipate what may happen in the future as well as anticipate what the commander wants. Staff should always anticipate what the expectations are, he added.

## CLASS 61

The next class to attend the academy can expect another complex and challenging CPX, more so than what Class 60


experienced, explained the staff. Class 61 will benefit from the working out of kinks and issues that Class 60 identified. Instructors are already implementing improvements in preparation for the next group of students.

“We have people rewriting the planning and operations exercise, which will cover strategic levels from the national authority down to battalion level in a consecutive and logical manner,” Yates said, hinting at the previous lessons that needed to be rearranged. “There were a couple of places that went out of sequence, so we’ll take those out and make the curriculum and exercise run through each consecutive level.”

Reworking the curriculum is a tedious process as the staff goes through each facet of the classes. It’s not as easy as simply removing certain lessons, as aspects build upon one another.

The changes will make the exercise a weeklong event, and students will be split into battalion or brigade tactical operations centers, tackling a scenario anywhere in the world, whatever the staff decides to make it. Yates said that the students will run the TOCs as 24-hour operations for the entire exercise, working in shifts, so they’ll have to do shift changes and battle update briefs,” he said.

“It’ll be a matrix of events, with us injecting information into the events. For example, Bravo Company finds a dead body at these coordinates. How long will it take operations to call brigade?” he said, explaining a possible scenario. According to Yates, the simulated exercise will arm students “with the experience of having gone through the events, so they’ll be more comfortable in the real thing.”

Ultimately, the course and CPX will show students pertinent doctrinal processes from start to finish. “They’ll understand the important things that you can’t skip. They’ll be able to anticipate what the commander wants and know what needs to be done ahead of time,” Yates said. 

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Some members of Joint Task Force 2 discuss updates after a cycle of simulated warfare ran on the Command Post of the Future system. After each cycle, the teams necessarily regrouped, assessed the new turn of events, and planned new strategies according to the developments. Students employed the military decision-making process to help them strategize and anticipate events. Many of the recommendations made by Class 60 students will be implemented in future classes of the Sergeants Major Course to improve the experience and better prepare future students in performing at the operations level for battalion and brigade commands.



# Soldiers test the latest battlefield equipment

Increment 1 technology will equip brigade combat teams with robotics, sensors and networked communication to leverage mobility, protection and precision fire in different missions.

By Angela Simental

**A**fter eight years of war, the Army has learned that new tactics, techniques and technology must be developed to move from conventional warfare to counterterrorism, stated Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. in his February report, “Army Brigade Combat Team Modernization: Versatile Capabilities for an Uncertain Future.”

“To adapt to the vagaries of persistent conflict, the Army is adapting in doctrine, organization, training, leader development programs and the delivery of materiel with which we equip and outfit our Soldiers and units ... [T]his year — 2010 — we are fundamentally changing how we modernize the Army. We refer to this approach as the Brigade Combat Team Modernization,” Casey stated in his report.

A major addition is coming to brigade combat teams as part of the Army’s modernization plan. Increment 1, the first phase of the innovative strategy, is an equipment package that features an array of sensors, munitions and robotics that work together through a network, allowing Soldiers at the brigade level and below to communicate and control all the equipment separately and as one system. This cutting-edge technology is expected to increase Soldiers’ survivability.

“It’s about modernizing the Army with new equipment, new technology and new resources,” said Sgt. 1st Class Blake Summerlin, operations NCO for Increment 1. “We are fighting a new type of warfare, and we are finding there are certain gaps in dif-

ferent areas. We are finding that different equipment and technology will help us.”

The technology will be delivered to BCTs incrementally starting in 2011 in what are known as capability packages. The first to receive Increment 1 equipment for evaluation and testing purposes will be the 3rd Infantry Brigade Team, 1st Armor Division, Fort Bliss, Texas.

The Army has projected that by 2025, all BCTs will be equipped with this technology, Casey said.

“Capability packages may include doctrine organization, materiel and training solutions to address the highest priority needs,” Casey stated. The packages will fill the need for technology on the battlefield and will follow the Army Force Generation process, which ensures well-trained forces are ready to deploy on a determined schedule, he added.

The Increment 1 package will consist of the following systems: Urban and Tactical Unattended Ground Sensors, Class 1 unmanned aerial vehicles and small unmanned ground vehicles. BCTs will control the equipment via the Network Integration Kit.

The Non-Line-of-Sight Launch System, which was being considered as part of the capability package was cancelled by the Department of Defense on May 13. Under the new Army revision process, Capability Portfolio Reviews, it was decided that equipment which is “redundant and outdated” should be terminated.

Increment 1 was designed to provide Soldiers with “enhanced situational awareness, force protection and lethality

through the use of unattended and attended sensors and munitions,” the Army’s modernization Web site states.

“Normally, the battalion would give us the mission, and we would do terrain analysis or satellite imagery. This technology could help determine our course of action. It allows the system package equipment to go up there and confirm or deny a course of action,” said Capt. Jeffrey Sachs, who was part of a demonstration showcasing Increment 1 equipment at Adobe Village, Fort Bliss, on Feb. 22. “Now, I have more options. I can change my initial plan, and I have much more situational awareness.”

The Army Evaluation Task Force — the 5th BCT, 1st Armored Division at Fort Bliss — tested and evaluated the equipment, providing immediate feedback of what worked and what didn’t.

Sgt. Brad Butler, who tested the sensors and aerial vehicles, said the Increment 1 capability package “can give Soldiers data, aerial views on where the enemy is. It just gives us a better eye to detect dangers.”

Lt. Col. Kevin Hendricks, who was


also part of the testing at Fort Bliss, concurred. “[This equipment] will inform also the company commander. Now, when they need to make a decision, they will have a lot more information. Instead of visualizing it, commanders can see and confirm information. They will have much better situational awareness and, therefore, better understanding of the battlefield,” he said. “When I was commander, I had a map, a radio and a compass. Now, the company commander of the future has advanced equipment and technology to maneuver better.”

Increment 1 will not only improve communication among higher and lower levels and keep them connected, it will also help those at lower levels make informed decisions that can prove critical on the battleground, according to the modernization Web site. This technology will provide these Soldiers with unit intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to carry out dangerous missions.

“You will be saving lives. You don’t have to get Soldiers out there because you can monitor a building without sending them in,” said Sgt. Yoshico Paz, who has

tested the equipment. “There will be more information ahead of time — images and visuals — and better decisions can be made.”

The Army will continue to enhance the capabilities of Increment 1 and continue with the second capability package, Increment 2, starting in 2013.

The Army will also focus on developing and fielding a new Ground Combat Vehicle, one of its most ambitious projects, expected to have its first prototype by 2017. “Our goal for the GCV... [is to] equal or surpass the under-belly protection offered by Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle, the off-road mobility and side protection of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the mobility of the Stryker,” Casey stated. “The GCV platform will also integrate the network to maintain situational awareness in urban and other operations.” 

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## Timeline: The Army’s Modernization Plan

- 2003** The Future Combat Systems program began with the goal of creating networked manned and unmanned air and ground equipment.
- 2004** The Army decided to deliver FCS equipment to BCTs. Adjustments and trimming of the equipment were considered.
- 2006** The brigade-sized Army Evaluation Task Force was created at Fort Bliss, Texas, to give immediate feedback during testing and evaluation.
- 2008** The fielding priority was shifted from heavy BCTs to infantry BCTs to better meet the demand of current engagements.
- 2009** The Army replaced FCS with Program Executive Office Integration and took a new approach with the Army Modernization Plan, incorporating technology developed during the FCS program. Equipment will be delivered to BCTs incrementally through capability packages.
- 2011** The 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Bliss will be the first to receive the Increment 1 networked system.
- 2012** Eight additional BCTs will receive the Increment 1 package for testing between 2012 and 2013.
- 2013** The second capability package, Increment 2, will be delivered.
- 2016** Capability packages will be delivered to 29 BCTs for fielding purposes.
- 2017** Fielded the first Ground Combat Vehicle.
- 2025** All BCTs will have capability packages.

*Editor’s note: The information above was taken from the report “Army Brigade Combat Team Modernization: Versatile Capabilities for an Uncertain Future,” by Gen. George W. Casey Jr., chief of staff of the Army.*

# Increment 1 equipment



## The Network

The network is an arrangement of interconnected computers, software, radios and sensors. It is an essential piece that enables what is called the Unified Battle Command, allowing every Soldier, from brigade to squad level, to be connected to the proper sensor data and communication relays to ensure proper battlespace situational awareness. Increment 1 will use the Network Integration Kit.

The NIK offers connectivity to transfer sensor and communication data to and from tactical wheeled vehicles.

“The network supports leaders in making timely, informed decisions and underpins organizational agility, lethality and sustainability. It allows Soldiers to know where other friendly forces and civilian populations are, where the enemy is reported to be and which weapon systems are available at any given time,” Casey stated in his report. “Components such as the NIK were designed to provide control of unmanned systems, fuse sensor data and distribute information to a common operating picture.”

This communication will augment intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, giving Soldiers more lethality. Currently, the network is being tested and evaluated to incorporate communication with joint service agencies.

## Tactical and Urban Unattended Ground Sensors

Ground sensors are divided into two groups: the AN/GRS 9 (V) 10 Tactical Unattended Ground Sensors, used for monitoring the inside of a building, and the Urban Unattended Ground Sensor, also known as the Urban Military Operations in Urban Terrain Advanced Sensor System, used to monitor the exterior.



Both types of sensors can take photographs and transmit them into an encrypted format. Because the sensors are networked, images can be shared throughout the brigade structure.

The T-UGS, which has ISR technology, will be used to complete

missions such as perimeter defense, surveillance and target detection and recognition. The sensors will help Soldiers have better situational awareness and detect threats, including radiological and nuclear hazards.

The Urban Unattended Ground Sensors, as the name suggests, will be used in urban areas, mainly supporting BCT operations by surveilling city-based corridors, stairwells, sewers, culverts and tunnels. They can be placed on strategic areas inside or outside a building — by Soldiers or robotic vehicles.

“We can camouflage sensors, which are about the size of a BlackBerry phone,” Hendricks said. The information gathered from the U-UGS can be shared through the Joint Tactical Radio System network. Hendricks also explained that the U-UGS can be used for residual protection for cleared areas, which means that instead of leaving a Soldier behind to do a surveillance mission, sensors can be camouflaged to monitor the building.

## XM156 Class 1 Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

Used at the platoon level, the Class 1 unmanned aerial vehicle was made especially for dismounted Soldiers, equipping them with reconnaissance, surveillance and target-acquisition and laser-designation technology.

Its technology is unprecedented, taking into account that its “hover-and-stare” ability is not currently available for urban and route surveillance. With this capability and its ability to broadcast live video from a side camera, the Class 1 UAV allows Soldiers to conduct surveillance on a building from a safe distance at the control center. Class 1 UAV operators can see from a computer screen the area where the aerial vehicle hovers and decide a plan of action based on the information they receive, Hendricks explained.

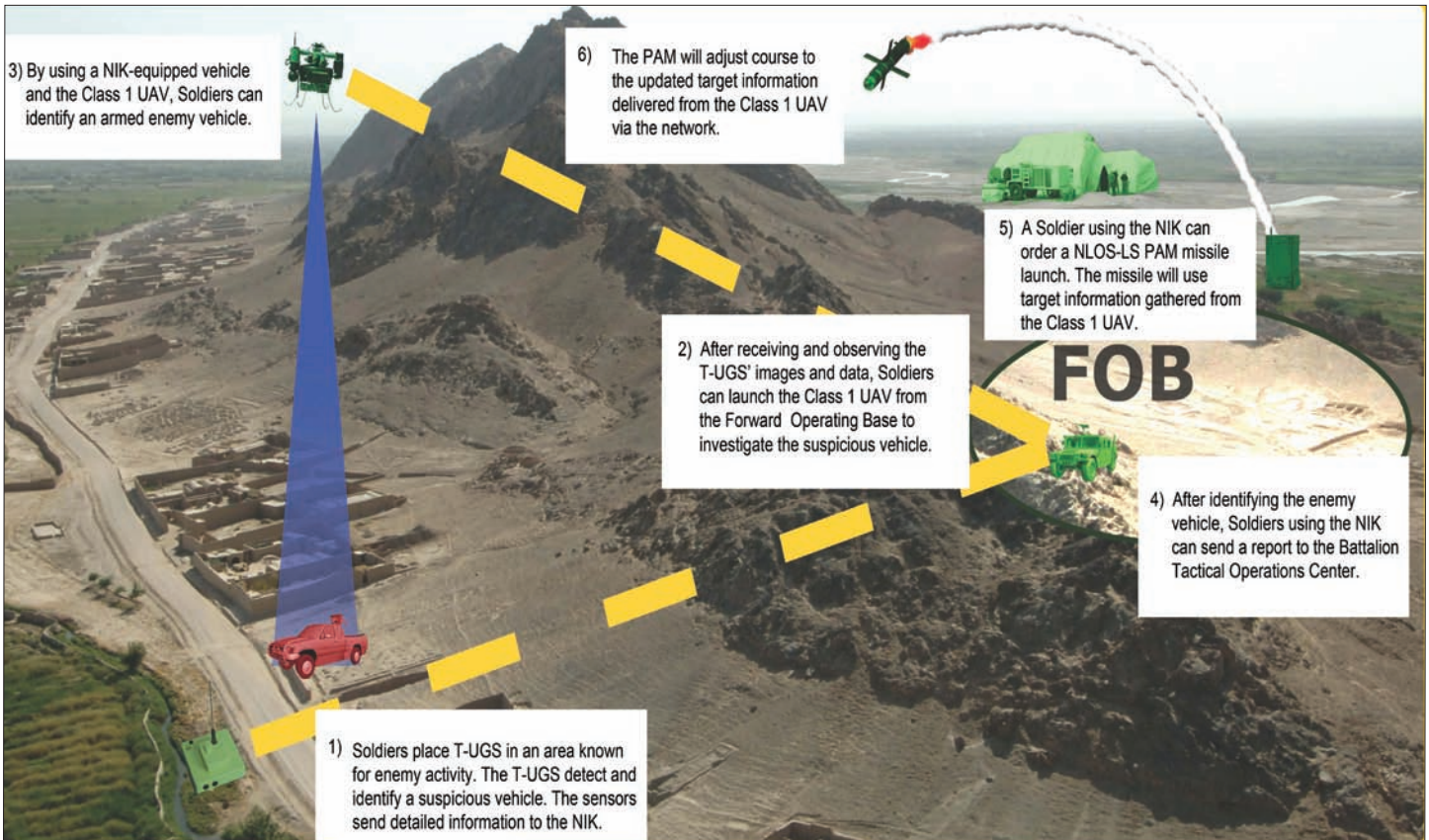
This hovering aerial vehicle, with the addition of other support equipment which can be mounted, weighs less than 51 pounds.

The UAV can easily operate in intricate urban landscapes since it can also be used along with selected ground and air equipment, operated by mounted or dismounted Soldiers. Although the UAV’s flight is self-directed, it will still connect with the network to update Soldiers on routes and information.

“The operator must maintain line of sight. And, in case the operator loses control, the UAV can go into autonomous flight,” Hendricks said. “It can go straight up to gain altitude and go over a building or go to a programmed location or to its launch point.”

The UAV will provide BCTs with scouting support and with early threat warnings in areas where larger equipment is incapable of going through.





Photos and graphic courtesy of Army modernization Web site and PEO Integration

The graphic above shows how Increment 1 equipment can work individually or together, depending on the mission. Through the Network Integration Kit, all Soldiers using the equipment can see a common operating picture and receive the same information and images.

### XM501 Non-Line of Sight-Launch System

The NLOS-LS's precision-guided munition technology will make missile-launching operations more precise and safer.



The launch system is comprised of two network-linked units: the Container Launch Unit and the Precision Attack Missiles.

The CLU is equipped with 12 PAMs, and a computer and communication system.

Prior to launch, the guided missiles obtain target information, and can also send updated information during flight. The information is transmitted in near real-time target imagery before the missile impacts its target.

Its trajectory shaping engagement modes eliminate the risk of hitting buildings or infrastructure between the missile and the target.

### XM 1216 Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle

The small, unmanned ground vehicle capabilities will help lower the risk of casualties associated with high-risk missions by alerting Soldiers of dangers before they enter an infrastructure.

This portable, 30-pound tool can conduct military operations in buildings, field fortifications, tunnels, sewers, subways, bunkers and other urban areas, leaving Soldiers at a safe distance while enemy information is confirmed.

As stated on the Army modernization website, "the Soldier will be able to conduct reconnaissance of a building, investigate suspected improvised explosive devices

or send the SUGV into caves or tunnels to seek out the enemy. Sensor information can be transmitted over the network to all levels of battalion operations."

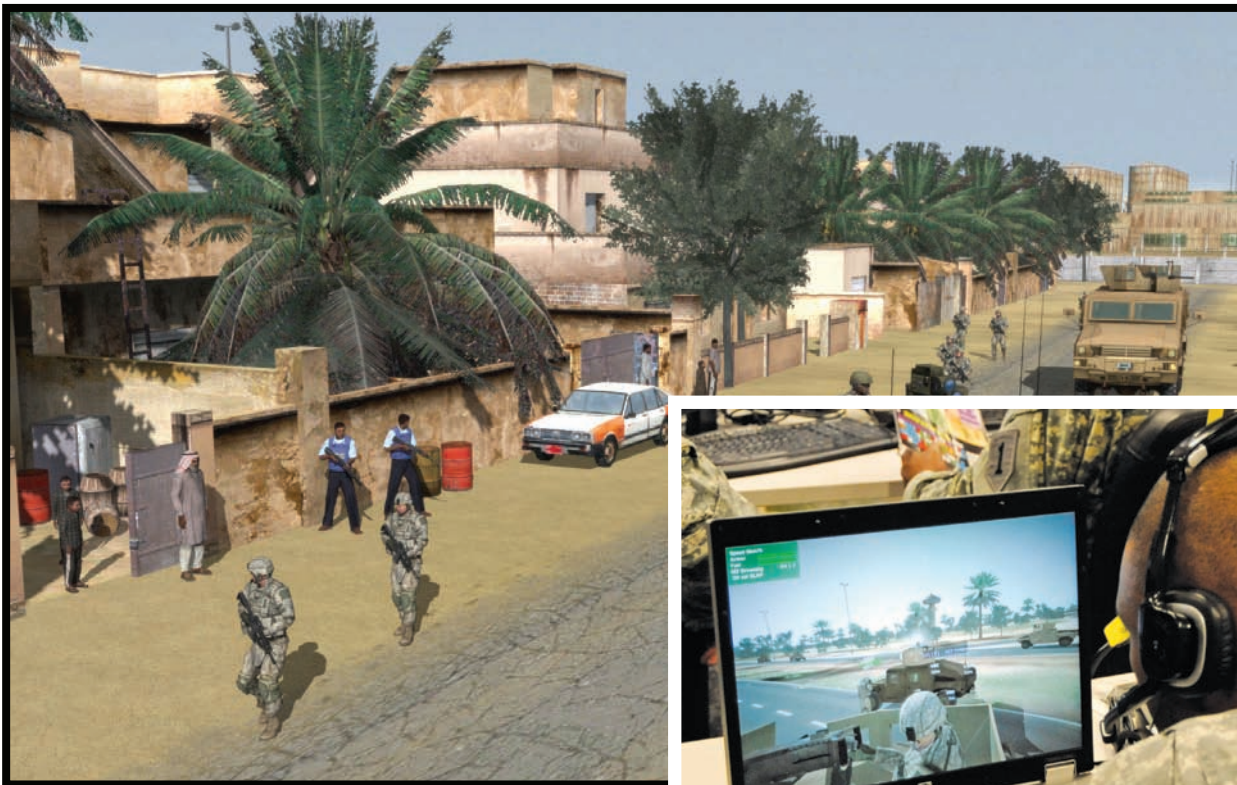
The SUGV also helps in missions involving the detection or confirmation of toxic chemicals and materials, as well as booby traps.

Additional mobile capabilities as well as plug-and-play equipment such as a manipulator arm, chemical and radiation detectors and laser designators will be fielded to enhance the performance of the SUGV, which can carry up to four pounds of extra devices.



# More than just a Game

Story and photos by Spc. Samuel J. Phillips



At right, A Soldier with Bravo Company, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, Fort Riley, Kan., mans the turret on his vehicle after his virtual convoy was ambushed during simulation training using Virtual Battlespace 2.

Throughout the Army, new training aids are providing leaders with valuable tools to ensure their Soldiers are ready to head to the field. Many of these come in the form of virtual simulators, found at most major installations, which can put a Soldier in the same type of environment they will be operating while deployed.

Though many of these simulators may resemble a first-person-shooter video game, they provide leaders the opportunity to train Soldiers in ways that were never before possible. At the same time, the simulators create a safe environment for Soldiers to learn important skills without the risk of injury or death.

One of these simulators is Virtual Battlespace 2. At first glance VBS2 looks just like a normal first-person shooter, a video

game genre centered around gun and projectile weapon-based combat where the player experiences the action through the eyes of their character. Once you get into the depths of its capabilities, it is easy to see the training benefits.

“We are able to put Soldiers into a realistic scenario in simulated areas that they will be operating in while in theater,” said David Eckel, lead VBS2 computer based trainer, at Fort Riley. “We can send them through downtown Baghdad, and they will actually be able to recognize structures like the Monument to the Unknown Soldier and the crossed sabers.”

This capability allows units to run missions just as they would in-country, Eckel said. Soldiers use their unit’s standard operating procedures and are briefed on the rules of engagement



and their mission. “These briefings are the same as the ones these Soldiers will receive downrange,” Eckel said. “And just like downrange, this gives the unit the chance to go over any last minute questions and training.”

“Based on what the unit wants, there are many different types of missions we can run,” Eckel said. “We can hit them with anything from an [improvised explosive device] to a full-out ambush of enemy forces. Or, we can just let them move from point A to point B, and let them practice radio communication, distancing and speed. The Soldiers never really know what’s going to hit them, so they have to be prepared for everything.”

After the briefing, Soldiers head out to their “vehicles.” Eckel said each “vehicle” consists of four laptops, a steering wheel and pedals for the driver, a simulated Blue Force Tracker in the truck commander’s position and headphones that connect each of the passengers with both convoy and command radio frequencies.

The system really kicks in once the mission begins, said Sgt. 1st Class Ralph Morrow, platoon sergeant, Bravo Company, 101st Brigade Support Battalion.

“They are able to record everything that my guys do, including the radio traffic,” he said. “This allows me to do an in-depth [after-action review] where I can point out where the Soldiers excelled and where they need improvement.”

The fact that the system records everything is one of the major features that makes it effective, Morrow said. “If

there are questions on what should have been done or what report should have been sent, we can open up that part of the mission and show the Soldiers in detail. This eliminates the guesswork, and we can focus more on the training.”

Another training tool that incorporates many similar features with a more hands-on approach is the Reconfigurable Vehicle Simulator. In the RVS, Soldiers are immersed in an interactive environment. This adds a new dimension to the virtual training, said Todd Hitchcock, a computer-based trainer at the Close Combat Tactical Trainer at Fort Riley.

During the training, Soldiers mount up on mock Humvees or Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Trucks, depending on which vehicle they want to train, Hitchcock said. “We try to make everything look and feel like the real thing as much as possible.”

The “real” feeling is further enhanced by the use of replica weapons such as M16 and M4 assault rifles, M9 pistols and M240 machine guns that function almost like the real things. “The weapons are loaded the same. All the switches and actions are the same, and they are air-powered so they even have about the same kick as the weapons they represent,” Hitchcock said.

The final, and probably most important component that completes the experience is the virtual world that is projected 360 degrees around the vehicle. Eight projectors mounted above the vehicle project the simulated environment onto the surrounding screens and bring the



Above: Sgt. 1st Class Ralph Morrow, platoon sergeant, Bravo Company, 101st Brigade Support Battalion, center, talks to Soldiers who “died” during a simulated convoy. Morrow uses this time to ask the driver and truck commander why they think they died and what they could have looked for or done to prevent it.





Above: Warrant Officer David Hemingway of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, scans his sector for possible threats after repelling an ambush during a training exercise with the Reconfigurable Vehicle Simulator.



Right: Pvt. Sheniel Gitelson of HHB, 1st Infantry Division, scans the road in front of her as her convoy stops for a suspected improvised explosive device during RVS training.

world to life. Hitchcock said, “This projected environment works with the sensors in the vehicle, weapons and hit sensors mounted next to the projectors to create a training experience bordering on real life.”

“The training really pulls you in,” said Sgt. Kenneth Hughes, of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley. “It is a great way for Soldiers to get some hands-on experience and familiarize themselves with convoy operations. Overall, it really gives them an edge when it comes to being ready for a deployment.”

Just like VBS2, the RVS system records everything, including radio transmissions, giving it great value during after-action reviews. “As a retired first sergeant, I can say from experience that being able to go over a training mission play-by-play is amazing,” Hitchcock said.

Finally, there is the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, a virtual range. This system has been in the Army for years and has evolved to become such a fundamental training aid that it is being used in basic training.

The overall setup of projectors, weapon systems and hit sensors is similar to those found in the RVS. However, there are some major differences when it comes to operating the system. Staff Sgt. Christopher Sharp, a combat engineer with Charlie



Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said the major difference is that with only a couple hours of training, the system can be operated by Soldiers.

“All the civilian operators have to do is start up the system and let us in the building, and then we take it from there,” Sharp said. “We hook up the weapon systems that we want to use, determine the programs we want to run and we are ready to start training.” The ease of use and the short time it takes to set up the EST 2000 allow units to get the most out of their time, Sharp said.

This is only one out of many benefits, Sharp said. “This system provides so many advantages to both the firer and the



# The NCOER

**O**f the many responsibilities an NCO has, few have more direct an impact on a Soldier's career prospects than correctly completing the NCO Evaluation Report. This official personnel record identifies the strengths and weaknesses of a Soldier as well as his or her capacity to be an effective and productive member of the Army team. As a Soldier's potential for promotion is gleaned from the information the rater presents in the NCOER, it is vital to learn both the proper process of evaluating a Soldier and how to succinctly, yet honestly, express accolades and criticism.

"It's your evaluation as to how well a Soldier is doing his or her job; you should take ownership in what you're saying about that person," said Command Sgt. Maj. John Longcor, commandant of the NCO Academy at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. "But, you'd be surprised at how many people don't know what an NCOER is. Some are learning about it in Structured Self-Development and think to themselves, 'Wow, I guess it's going to apply to me someday.' Then, they come into the Warrior Leader Course and they find out it's part of the Army's bread and butter for young leaders."

The new WLC program of instruction devotes four hours to learning and practicing the NCOER. Simplified, the report consists of accurate administrative data, descriptions of the work performed by the Soldier and ratings in various categories with supporting comments that justify the rating given.

According to regulations, the final report, DA Form 2166-8, should be prepared following adequate counseling between the rater and the Soldier being reviewed. DA Form 2166-8-1 is used during counseling to organize the official evaluation.

Because it is so fundamental to Army personnel decisions and Soldier professional development, an NCOER must be precisely tailored to identify the unique characteristics and specialties a Soldier brings to the job. Without an honest and justifiable appraisal of performance and potential, the Army cannot identify those who would best fit the limited slots available for advancement and Soldiers cannot identify the areas where growth is needed. Thus, a generic or impersonal NCOER — one that doesn't include well-written comments that support a given rating — does a disservice to both the Army and the Soldier being rated.

Ultimately, a single NCOER should not derail a Soldier's career. Instead, the NCOER should be seen as one tool in an entire evaluation process designed to foster open communication between subordinates and their superiors, encouraging continuous professional growth over immediate, unpromising perfection.

## NCOER COMMON MISTAKES

*The most frequently seen errors, according to the U.S. Army Human Resources Command:*

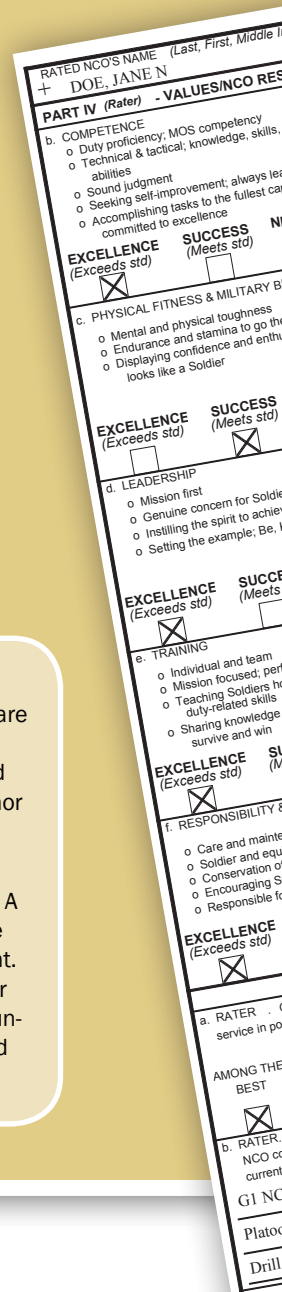
- ✘ **Wrong dates:** The form cannot be sent to Headquarters, Department of the Army, before the "thru" date. Likewise, the "from" date cannot overlap the "thru" date from the previous report.
- ✘ **Incomplete APFT data:** You must include the Soldier's Army Physical Fitness Test score if rated "needs improvement" in the physical fitness section. Ad-

ditionally, profile status must be explained.

- ✘ **Inconsistent ratings:** In the final section, the ratings given for performance and potential for promotion must be similar.
- ✘ **Lackluster comments:** Bullet comments are the only way for a rater to justify the rating given, especially when "excellence" or "needs improvement" is marked. Comments should indicate how much the Soldier exceeded or failed to meet standards and give

examples of why or why not.

- ✘ **Generalities:** Comments that are too brief, vague or trite neither convey the information needed to make personnel decisions nor aid the Soldier's professional development. Be specific.
- ✘ **Repetition or embellishment:** A particular example can only be used once as a bullet comment. Also, handwritten comments or type designed to stand out — underlined, bold or italic — should not be used.





# DA Form 2166-8: Filling out an NCOER

### ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Use the proper rank abbreviations and ensure that the Social Security number is correct.

### PERIOD COVERED

Annual NCOERs must cover no more than 12 months. After a change of rater, the period must be at least 90 days.

### RATING CHAIN

While Department of the Army civilians are authorized to be raters and reviewers, at least one in the rating chain must be a member of the military.

### SIGNATURES

If using PureEdge form-completion software, these blocks can be digitally signed, but not more than 14 days before the form's "thru" date.

### RATING

"Excellence" must be justified by specific examples and measurable results. "Success" is meeting the standard. "Needs improvement" must also be explained.

### ANATOMY OF A GOOD COMMENT

Bullet comments should be preceded with a small letter "o," start with a verb, and are limited to one to two lines. Be short, concise and to the point. Use past tense.

### BULLET COMMENTS

Quantitative and substantive comments are required to explain areas where the NCO is particularly strong or needs improvement.

### DON'T GENERALIZE

Comments should be listed in the order of strength and quantify the NCO's success — use numbers to justify the rating given.

The background image shows a DA Form 2166-8 NCO Evaluation Report. The form is divided into several sections: PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA, PART II - RATING CHAIN, PART III - BULLET COMMENTS, and PART V - OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL. The form includes fields for name, unit, station, SSN, rank, and dates. It also has a section for bullet comments with a grid for rating (1-5) and a section for overall performance with a grid for rating (1-5). The form is annotated with callouts pointing to various sections.

# NCO Stories

*A selection of Valor*



## Sgt. Gary B. Beikirch

### *Citation to award the Medal of Honor*

*For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, Sgt. Gary B. Beikirch was awarded the Medal of Honor.*

*A medic with Detachment B-24, Company B, Beikirch distinguished himself during the defense of Camp Dak Seang on April 1, 1970, in Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam. The allied defenders suffered a number of casualties as a result of an intense, devastating attack launched by the enemy from well-concealed positions surrounding the camp.*

*Beikirch with complete disregard for his own safety, moved unhesitatingly through the withering enemy fire to his fallen comrades, applied first aid to their wounds and assisted them to a medical aid station. When informed that a seriously injured American officer was lying in an exposed position, Beikirch ran immediately through the hail of fire. Even with serious wounds*

*from fragments of an exploding enemy mortar shell, Beikirch carried the officer to a medical aid station.*

*Continuing to ignore his injuries, Beikirch left the safety of the medical bunker to search for and evacuate other men who had been injured. In the process, he was again wounded as he dragged a seriously injured Vietnamese soldier to the medical bunker while simultaneously applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to sustain his life.*

*Beikirch again refused treatment and continued his search for other casualties with the help of two Montagnard men, who carried him until he collapsed. Only then did he permit himself to be treated.*

*Beikirch's complete devotion to the welfare of his comrades – even at the risk of his own life – are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the U.S. Army.*

# Medal of Honor recipient recounts deadly attack in Vietnam

By **Stephanie Sanchez**

The screams still echo, the explosions still roar and the gunfire still thunders.

It has been 40 years, but the violent attack on Camp Dak Seang in Kontum Province, Vietnam remains alive in Sgt. Gary B. Beikirch's mind.

Beikirch remembers how artillery and rockets began pouring onto the campsite early April 1, 1970 – almost 11 years since the beginning of the Vietnam War.

Among the chaos, bodies lay silently on the ground, he stated in an account of the attack on The Spirit of America Web site.

Many people died that day, but some survived with Beikirch's help. For his bravery, Beikirch was awarded the Medal of Honor – the nation's highest medal for valor – three years later.

During the war, Beikirch was a medic with Detachment B-24, Company B, 5th Special Forces Group. His team was set up in a village of about 2,300 people, mostly women and children, from the Montagnard tribe.

"Our peaceful Montagnard jungle camp was surrounded by three North Vietnamese regiments," he said of the day the camp was invaded. "The 'human wave' assault of ground troops began. Our jungle home had become a scene of horror, terror and death."

Among those dead, Beikirch said was a wounded man from the tribe. He ran across an open space and tried treating the man when an explosive hit.

"As I threw my body over the wounded man to shield him from the explosive, I felt like I had been kicked in the back by a horse. Shrapnel from the blasts had slammed into my back and abdomen," he recounted. "The concussion from the blast had thrown me about 25 feet into a wall of sandbags by our mortar pit. I tried to get up but could not move my legs."

Two men from the tribe ran to Beikirch's rescue and tried to carry him to safety. But Beikirch refused. With the help of the tribesmen, Beikirch treated more "wounded people, dragged

bodies, distributed ammunition, directed fire and fought for their lives."

In his effort to assist more people, Beikirch was wounded two more times. He continued to lose blood, became weak and lost consciousness, according to his recount on The Spirit of America Web site.

Although his narrative does not mention it, several accounts state that Beikirch also ran through heavy fire to help a fellow Soldier who had been wounded during the attack.

Beikirch said he could remember little about being airlifted to the hospital.

"From [then] on, my personal memories are a swirling stream of sporadic events," he said. "Watching the medevac helicopters being shot down as they tried to get me out; strong arms reaching down and pulling me into the 'warm belly' of a chopper; the face of the young medic shocked at seeing that I was still alive, but telling me I was going to be OK; being thrown onto a litter and rushed into an operating room; IVs in my arms and neck, catheters in every opening of my body, lights, shouting and then darkness."

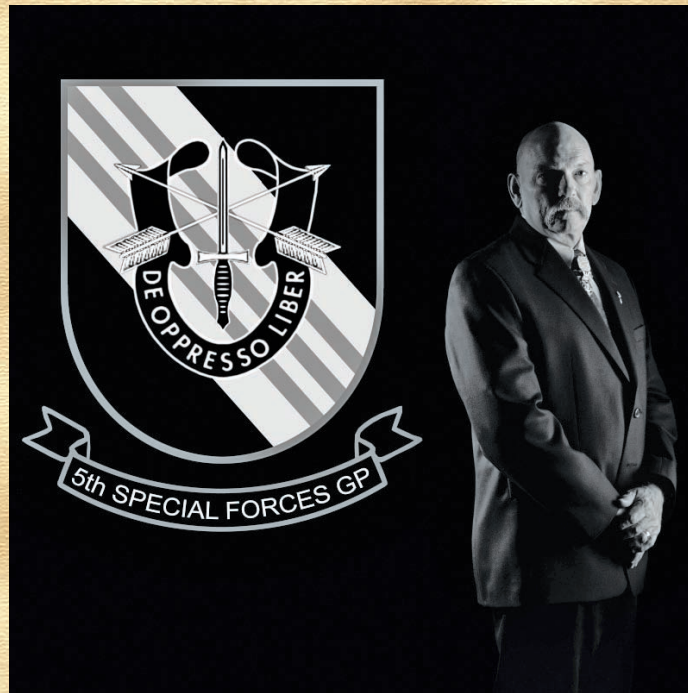
The following days, Beikirch went in and out of consciousness. He slowly recovered from the injuries to his stomach and back and was discharged from the Army.

In 1973, he joined the seminary. That year, he received a phone call from Washington,

D.C., informing him he would be given the Medal of Honor, which was presented by President Richard Nixon.

"God does have a plan and a purpose for our lives, and although there is no mystery to finding Him, at times it is a mystery to walk with Him. It wasn't easy for me at first," Beikirch said. "Even now there are times when I fail to trust His love completely. But then I remember my two [Montagnard] friends who loved me, protected me and carried me when I couldn't walk. If I could trust them with my life, why shouldn't I be able to trust Jesus?"

To read Beikirch's entire account, visit <http://www.thespiritofamerica.info/beikirch.html>.



Sgt. Gary B. Beikirch was featured in *Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty*. Beikirch earned the Medal of Honor, which is the nation's highest medal of valor, for his actions in the Vietnam War. The above photo illustration was taken from The Spirit of America Web site

Photo by Nick Del Calzo

# Airborne NCO awarded Silver Star Medal for heroism

By Rick Scavetta  
U.S. Army Africa

A noncommissioned officer who shielded his fellow Soldiers to protect them from shrapnel received the third highest medal of valor for his actions.

Hundreds of maroon-bereted Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team gathered Nov. 30, 2009, to honor Staff Sgt. Matthew Matlock for saving the lives of his comrades.

Paratroopers stood at attention at Caserma Ederle's post theater in Vicenza, Italy, as Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III, commander of U.S. Army Africa, fastened the Silver Star to Matlock's uniform.

During the ceremony, Matlock's thoughts turned to the men who were with him the day of the attack, and the suffering they endured. Matlock said he was just doing his job as an NCO, which was not something for which he deserved an award. Soldiers in combat are brothers – family, he said.

"They were wounded and couldn't fight back. I was going to make sure they made it out of there," Matlock said. "They would have done it for me, so I did it for them."

Not a day passes when Matlock doesn't think about when his convoy was attacked on June 20, 2008. The group was moving through Zerok, Afghanistan.

"It was one of those days," Matlock said. "We were on our way back to Orgun-E from our last mission. We were getting ready to go home."

Just a few miles from their destination, the patrol came across enemy fighters who attacked Matlock's patrol with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades.

One RPG struck an external fuel tank, sending flames and shrapnel inside their vehicle. Three Soldiers were seriously wounded.

"Everything broke loose. We kept trying to push through. But they targeted our truck with RPGs and disabled it," Matlock said. "They just kept hitting us one after the other, until finally the truck caught fire. And I had to get everybody out of there."

Wounded and under fire, Matlock evacuated his injured comrades and treated them. He then fired back and also directed his squad to shoot at enemy positions.

RPGs, however, continued to pour, sending hot metal fragments through the air. Each time the grenades hit and splattered shrapnel, Matlock used his body to shield his fellow Soldiers.

Matlock said he allowed his instincts to take over even though he received shrapnel wounds.

"You never know, really, what you're made of until you're put into that situation," he said. "You don't really think about anything else except getting your guys out of there. That was all that was going through my head – these guys are going to make it home. I made sure of it."

Almost two years have passed since that day in Afghanistan. During the ceremony, Matlock listened to Garrett speak about his courage during the attack.

"Staff Sgt. Matlock fought with incredible bravery, deliberately putting himself at risk time and time again to save the lives of his men," Garrett said. "He stepped forward without hesitation and did everything we expect of a seasoned combat leader of any rank."

Matlock, 26, an Amarillo, Texas, native, followed in the footsteps of his father, retired Master Sgt. William Matlock, who was in the U.S. Army Special Forces.

In 2002, Matthew Matlock joined the infantry and underwent airborne training before joining 1-503rd, the battalion known as "First

rock," where he served in the scout platoon sniper section. In March 2003, Matlock served a yearlong tour in Iraq. In 2005, Matlock served a year in Afghanistan. Afterward, Matlock joined Company C, 1-503rd, rising from team leader to squad leader. In 2007, Matlock deployed a second time to Afghanistan and returned a third time in 2009. But it was during his 2007 tour when his actions merited the Silver Star, which is the military's third highest award for bravery.

Matlock currently serves as a weapons squad leader with Company C. He said he is inspired by the young volunteers who fill the ranks, "ready to learn and ready to fight," still knowing they will be sent into harm's way. During training, he pushes his troops to their limits to prepare them for combat. He hopes his recognition sets a standard for other Soldiers.

"I just want them to know it is real – the bullets are real out there," Matlock said. "It's not a game."



Photo by Barbara Romano

Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III, commander of U.S. Army Africa, attaches the Silver Star to Staff Sgt. Matthew Matlock's uniform during a November 2009 ceremony held at Caserma Ederle, in Vicenza, Italy.





# NCO awarded Silver Star for courage under fire in Afghanistan

By Capt. Joseph Sanfilippo  
2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment

Combat united them two years ago. Camaraderie united them once more.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment came together to honor one of their own for his courage, leadership and quick thinking while under fire in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Conrad Begaye stood humbly as a Silver Star was fastened to his uniform during a ceremony June 30, 2009, at Caserma Ederle's Hoekstra Field in Vicenza, Italy. The medal was awarded in recognition for his valor during an enemy ambush Nov. 9, 2007, in the Nuristan province.

"There are people who have passed on who deserve this," Begaye said. "There were five men who died. I'll accept and wear it in honor of them, not for my actions, but for theirs."

Begaye said he would have preferred a handshake or a pat on the back, because infantrymen don't fight for medals but for each other. That is why he felt grateful to have his fellow Soldiers behind him during the ceremony.

"What happened there is something I think about every day," Begaye said. "It's not easy to forget."

That day, Begaye's unit, also known as the "Chosen company," had just met with local Afghan leaders. The company, along with the platoon's headquarters sections and a squad of Afghan National Army soldiers, were hiking eastward on a small path in rugged terrain when they were sprayed with bullets.

Begaye, who received a gunshot wound to the arm, was pinned down but managed to return fire. He then told his troops to follow him down a rocky slope to find cover. Keeping composed and ignoring his injury, Begaye directed and encouraged the Soldiers to safety.

One of those Soldiers was a paratrooper who had been shot in both legs and was still taking fire. Knowing the enemy would shift their target away if they thought the Soldier was dead, Begaye told the paratrooper to play dead. The move likely helped save the Soldier's life.

Begaye then moved another wounded Soldier to a nearby cave to protect him from the hail of bullets.

Using a radio, Begaye called his higher headquarters and directed mortar fire onto enemy positions, which essentially ended the battle. He then motivated a Soldier to organize a defensive perimeter of Afghan Soldiers to prevent their unit from being harassed or overrun.

Two years later, most of the Soldiers in that ambush were standing behind Begaye at the ceremony. U.S. Army Africa commander Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III told the audience Begaye's devotion to his fellow Soldiers was amazing.

"Today, we honor a noncommissioned officer whose bold actions turned the tide of battle and saved the day. ... [His] courage under fire and fierce loyalty to his men still astounds us all," Garrett said. "Outnumbered, wounded and initially pinned down in the kill zone of the enemy ambush, he didn't hesitate to leap forward – literally – and take charge of the fight."

Garrett also talked about the Warrior Ethos, ideas that guide Soldiers. The Warrior Ethos states that a Soldier should place the mission first, never accept defeat, never quit and never leave a fallen comrade.

"These are just words to some people. But the Warrior Ethos is a way of life to Staff

Sgt. Begaye," Garrett said. "Amazing acts of bravery and valor were commonplace that grim day. But this morning, we recognize Staff Sgt. Begaye for his courage. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve with such a man."

Begaye, a Navajo from Black Canyon, Ariz., enlisted in the infantry 10 years ago. He was an airborne ranger when he was sent to Vicenza in 2003. Before his tour to Nuristan province in 2007, he had deployed to Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2005.

Begaye hopes his story will help younger Soldiers understand the importance of training, leadership and motivation. He said he wants his story to convey the reality of war to troops eager to experience combat.

"It should open their eyes. A firefight is a life-altering experience, one that I'm still living through," Begaye said. "Soldiers should understand ... this is real life, and people do die."



Photo by Joseph Sanfilippo

Staff Sgt. Conrad Begaye stands before rows of fellow Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, during a ceremony on June 30, 2009. Begaye was awarded the Silver Star for his valorous actions during an enemy ambush Nov. 9, 2007, in the Nuristan province of Afghanistan.

# NCOs in Africa:

## Adapting to a new mission

Story and photos by Rick Scavetta  
U.S. Army Africa



Staff Sgt. Chad Sloan, a U.S. Army Africa NCO, assists Rwanda Defence Force instructors during live fire training at Gabiro, Rwanda.

**D**uring Natural Fire 10, African soldiers in northern Uganda were surprised to hear a U.S. Army noncommissioned officer speaking Luo, their language.

Staff Sgt. John Okumu, a 35-year-old logistics NCO from the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, just smiled and explained how he was raised in Kenya speaking Luo and had returned to Africa as part of the U.S. Army Africa-led humanitarian and civic assistance exercise.

Okumu rose to the challenge of being a goodwill ambassador for his command and the U.S. Army, said Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III, commander of U.S. Army Africa.

“This outstanding NCO represented the highest level of professionalism while interacting with our counterparts,” Garrett said. “U.S. Army NCOs will continue to lead many of our efforts on the continent, setting a great example by sharing their knowledge, experience and leadership abilities.”

During renovations at Kitgum High School, curious teens asked Okumu how they could join the U.S. Army and be like him. Okumu, who joined the U.S. Army five years ago after moving to Missouri, never dreamed he would one day deploy to the continent he once called home, let alone serve as an example for African NCOs or even curious teens wondering how they could become like him.

“Everyone has a talent. You just need to find out what yours is,” Okumu said. “Education is the key.”

Okumu’s sentiment on education exemplifies the professionalism of U.S. Army NCOs working in Africa. They undertake

missions that build NCO effectiveness within African partner nation militaries. They work in small teams with niche capabilities. Often, they set examples for African NCOs to emulate.

Over the past year, those efforts have marked significant improvement to ongoing military partnerships in Africa.

In December 2008, the U.S. Army Southern European Task Force (SETAF) began its transformation to become the Army component to U.S. Africa Command. Then, the U.S. government announced it would airlift Rwandan peacekeepers’ equipment into Darfur, a war-torn region of the Sudan. A U.S. Army Africa NCO was on the Rwandan tarmac to lend a hand.

At Kigali International Airport, a U.S. Air Force officer watched skeptically as Rwandan soldiers marked equipment and loaded gear onto a C-17 cargo plane. He asked Staff Sgt. Brian Ruse if that was okay. Ruse, 31, of Summerville, S.C., was part of a U.S. Army Africa team that mentored Rwandan Defence Force troops on load planning.

“It’s all right, sir,” Ruse said, confidently. “They got it.”

It’s not always Africans learning from Americans. In many cases, U.S. Army NCOs take skills from their African counterparts. In South Africa, Staff Sgt. John Otfinoski, a squad leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, attended advanced survival training in the bush.

Otfinoski, along with Master Sgt. Robert Seifert of Special Operations Command-Africa, and Sgt. 1st Class Nickolas Maney of the 6th Ranger Training Battalion, underwent a grueling three-week South African Special Forces course. South African instruc-

tors — veteran Zulu soldiers who grew up in the bush and fought with the SASF in Angola in the early 1980s — taught U.S. Army NCOs how to survive in the wild with little more than a rifle and canteen.

“Deployments have increased my awareness of training and preparation,” Otfinoski said. “South African Special Forces’ training taught me a lot. Now, I’ve passed that knowledge on to my Soldiers.”

More often, though, U.S. Army NCOs in Africa are using their leadership skills and training experiences to mentor African NCOs in partner nations’ militaries.

While assigned to Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, NCOs from the Fort Sill, Okla.-based 2-18th Field Artillery Regiment supervised security for medical and engineering missions in East African nations. They also led several military-to-military partnership missions.

In Ethiopia, six senior NCOs mentored military instructors. U.S. Army NCOs worked at Uganda’s NCO Academy, focusing on leadership development for both junior and senior NCOs. One NCO worked at the International Mine Action Center in Nairobi, Kenya, where he mentored Kenyans and other African nationals in disaster relief operations. When the 2-18th returned to the States, NCOs from the 1st Battalion, 65th Infantry, Puerto Rico National Guard, continued the NCO-led partnerships in East Africa.

Army NCOs have also supported Liberia Security Sector Reform, a U.S. State Department-led mentoring mission in Liberia. NCOs with experience in logistics, infantry operations and military police work partnered with Liberian NCOs during three-month assignments. Most recently, Sgt. 1st Class Dedraf Blash, a U.S. Army Africa medical NCO, mentored female Liberian soldiers and medics at Camp Sandi Ware outside Monrovia, the Liberian capital. The work was rewarding to her, she said.

“There’s nothing more special than to have someone say, ‘You helped me be a better person,’” Blash said. “It brings a smile to my face and the words ‘mission accomplished’ show in my heart.”



U.S. Army Reserve Cpl. John Pearson speaks with local villagers gathered outside the health clinic at Palabek-kal, Uganda, during Natural Fire 10.



Sgt. 1st Class Roddy Rieger, a USARAF medical NCO, used hands-on experiences to mentor Djiboutian military members during medical evacuation familiarization.

In mid-2009, U.S. Army Africa welcomed Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Bronson to the command. His three decades of experience influences how U.S. Army Africa NCOs work.

When U.S. Army Africa NCOs led mentoring sessions in Rwanda, they spent one evening showing RDF instructors how to clear buildings using the “four stack.” By the next morning, Rwandan NCOs were in the lead, mentoring their own troops in the task.

“That’s a great example of what we expect of U.S. NCOs in Africa,” Bronson said. “U.S. Army Africa partnerships revolve around training the trainer.”

U.S. Army NCOs in Africa work alongside African NCOs, assisting them to take the lead, Bronson said.

“Our NCOs are not going to lecture African NCOs on the continent,” Bronson said. “It’s best for young African soldiers to see their leaders training them.”

In both current and future engagements, this belief is built into NCO planning for partner engagements on the continent.

Recently, Sgt. 1st Class Roddy Rieger, 35, of Bismarck, N.D., went to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, to mentor 29 military students on medical evacuations. A senior USARAF medical NCO who served in Iraq and Afghanistan with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, Rieger knew that understanding both cultural and language issues would be the key to success. When building lessons, Rieger also relied on previous partnership assignments in Tunisia and Morocco. He conducted the five-day course using hands-on exercises and simulated hostile environments, knowing that approach would leave a greater impression. That way, they take what they learned back to their units and teach others, he said.

“I’m an NCO, and medicine is my passion,” Rieger said. “If we helped just one Djiboutian learn about our medical procedure and he later uses that knowledge to save a life, or teach others to do the same — well, that’s what it’s all about.”

# What is an NCO?

By Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Bertram  
Ohio Army National Guard

What is an NCO? Quite simply, an NCO is a small group leader. There are thousands of us within the ranks of the strongest and smartest fighting force on the planet protecting the greatest country on earth. We also know that some of the smaller groups are far more elite than others because they are strengthened by a chain of strong and motivated NCOs whose leadership and passion catapult their team into the forefront of the military machine we call the U.S. Army. They lead by example, by always doing the right thing instead of just doing what they need to do.

I believe that in the hearts of the best NCOs you will find the hearts found in great Americans like James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Omar Bradley, George Patton, Creighton Abrams, Colin Powell and Gen. David Patraeus — individuals whose hearts are rich with selfless service, a competitive spirit to always be the best, compassion for the less fortunate and passion for defending the freedoms and ideals of our great nation.

What separates good and great NCOs from the mediocre and uncaring who spent a year or so looking out for themselves so they could make the list and sew on the stripes? The truth is, anyone can be an NCO, but few rise to the level of leadership associated with the likes of Sgt. Elijah Churchill, Sgt. William Brown and Sgt. Daniel Bissell, who were awarded the Badge of Military Merit during the American Revolution. The badge was a purple heart with a floral border and the word “merit” inscribed across the center. This award served as the precursor to the Medal of Honor, which was introduced during the Civil War.

Though bravery can be found more in the NCO Corps than in any other ranks in the Army, good order and discipline should be found among its NCOs as well. Since the days of 1st

Sgt. Purcival Lowe, who viewed whiskey as a primary source of discipline problems for enlisted men, the responsibility to maintain order and discipline has fallen on the shoulders of the NCO. Lowe often talked with other noncommissioned officers about this and cautioned them to give personal attention to their men to assure that they were not drinking to excess. Sometimes drunken men brought before Lowe ended up locked in the storeroom until they sobered up. Offenders received extra duty as punishment.

Lowe and the NCOs of the company established the “company courts-martial,” which was not recognized by Army regulations. This allowed the NCOs to enforce discipline for breaking minor regulations without lengthy proceedings. In the days before the summary court-martial, it proved effective to discipline a man by the company court-martial and avoid ruining his career by bringing him before three officers of the regiment.

The best NCOs are those who constantly seek self-improvement, and are not afraid to apply education and critical thinking to think outside the box. They aren’t afraid to try what’s never been tried before. As a result of this quality, we have seen an explosion in the number of college-educated NCOs in our Army. Today’s best NCOs don’t seek to apply their education and knowledge to further their own career but to further and improve the careers and lives of those whom they lead. They push their Soldiers to be the best they can be because this is how to best maintain order and discipline while also maintaining the finest fighting force on the planet.

Today’s NCOs preserve a tradition — more than 234 years old — of constant improvement in learning, training, fighting and adherence to the Army Values and the Warrior Ethos. Those who don’t find themselves falling out of ranks and usually after they have infected, like a cancer, other potential great leaders.



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NCO Net is an Armywide NCO Network designed to support the flow of knowledge throughout the Noncommissioned Officers Corps. As part of BCKS, NCO Net members can share thoughts, ideas, lessons, and experiences up to the FOUO level with other NCOs and subject matter experts. Your participation will help you become a better NCO and ultimately support the professional growth of your fellow NCOs and the Army.

There are great discussions about timely and relevant issues and topics. Go to <https://nconet.bcks.army.mil> and become a member to participate in these discussions as well as to ask your question or to find certain content that our members have contributed over the years to help you as a leader in your day-to-day activities.



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# What is the correct NCO Creed?

Good afternoon,

My name is Staff Sgt. Robert Fadden and I teach at the Fort Lewis, Wash., NCO Academy. Throughout my time as an NCO, and now instructor and mentor of newly promoted NCOs, there has been a question that has continued to bother me and I have yet to find closure. Upon becoming a noncommissioned officer from my induction ceremony, through all phases of my Noncommissioned Officer Education System attendance, and throughout my career — I have memorized and strived to achieve all the milestones that our NCO Creed depicts.

There are many variations of the NCO Creed; the one published in FM 7-22.7, which is what we teach at the Warrior Leader Course, states in paragraph two, “that I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient.” There is another version of the creed published in DA PAM 600-25 which states just the opposite, “that I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient.” If you look online at the NCO Creed that was recited at the Year of the NCO ceremony, it directly corresponds with the FM 7-22.7. Considering this dilemma, I would find it appropriate if someone could publish an official version of the NCO Creed.

The discrepancy noticed in these two versions may seem minor to some; however, there is confusion as to what the standard is. As a standard bearer that teaches young NCOs how to become proficient leaders, I feel this is very important, not only for myself, but for the entire NCO Corps. I would hope that by the end of you reading this e-mail, a single version of the creed is generated and pushed down to all NCOs through their leadership. Thanks for attention in this matter.

*Staff Sgt. Fadden, we took your question to the folks at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Directorate of Doctrine and Training Development, the individuals responsible for publishing FM 7-22.7, The NCO Guide, and they came up with an answer we hope will bring you closure.*

*First, according to the 2007 Army Modernization Plan published by the Army G-8, the hierarchy of Army doctrine places FMs above DA PAMs. Therefore, the version that appears in FM 7-22.7 is the correct one, and USASMA has notified the authors of DA PAM 600-25 of their discrepancy. They are in the process of correcting it. Here is the correct version of the NCO Creed:*

## NCO Creed

*No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as “The Backbone of the Army”. I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.*

*Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind — accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain technically and tactically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.*

*Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!*



# PHOTO JOURNAL





**U.S. and Afghan Soldiers determine which route to take to the village of PyroKheyl in Kherwar district in Afghanistan's Logar province. The purpose of their mission was to check on conditions and maintain security in the village. The Soldiers are assigned to 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.**

*Photo by Sgt. Russell Gilcrest*

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# PHOTO JOURNAL

▶ Cpl. Mark Woodyard teaches Afghan children how to do push-ups at the Sanayee High School in Ghazni province, Afghanistan. Woodyard, a security forces member, is assigned to the Texas Agribusiness Development Team, which is deployed to Forward Operating Base Ghazni, Afghanistan. *Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. J.T. May III*

▼ Spc. Craig C. Smith, a wounded warrior recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., launches a discus during training for the inaugural Warrior Games to be held in May. Smith lost his right leg to a roadside bomb April 2009 and will be among the 200 disabled veterans and wounded active duty service members participating in the Warrior Games. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Carden*



▶ Soldiers of the 22nd Chemical Battalion (Technical Escort), Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., undergo a vigorous exercise testing their skill and knowledge in decontamination of chemical agents during a Chemical Response Team exercise in the Edgewood Area. *Photo by Yvonne Johnson*





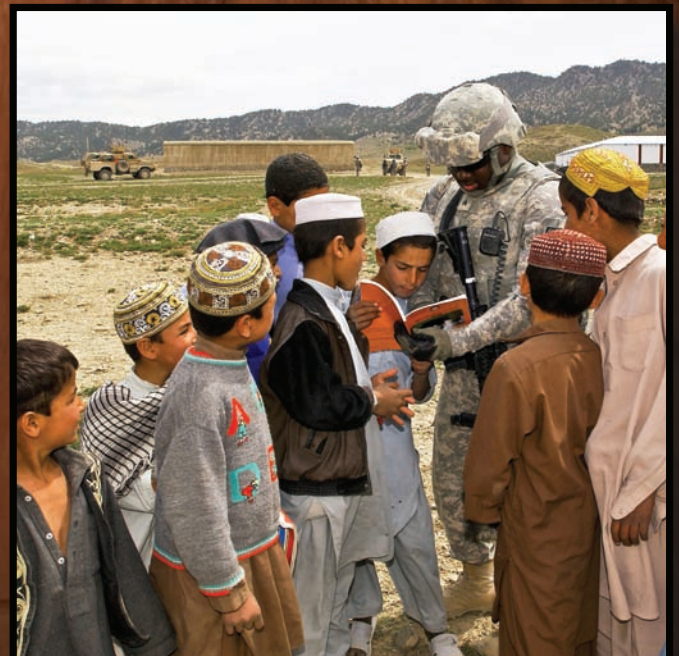


▲ Cpl. Shane Rager, left, provides security during a quality assurance check of the new road that extends from the Tani district center to Narizah village in Khost province, Afghanistan. Rager is an infantryman assigned to the Khost Provincial Reconstruction Team. The new road will provide a safer and more efficient route through the countryside. *Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Julianne M. Showalter*



▲ The new Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program aims to enhance fitness for Soldiers and their families by extending the idea of fitness to every part of life. One of the CSF program's aims is to end the stigma that asking for help is a sign of weakness. *Photo by Christopher Bush*

▼ Sgt. Terrance Ray reads a book to children while on a mission in Orgun, Paktika province, Afghanistan. Ray is a member of the security force element for the Paktika Provincial Reconstruction Team's Orgun detachment. The team's mission is to help legitimize the government of Afghanistan through development, governance and agricultural initiatives. *Photo by U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester*



# Roll call

o f t h e f a l l e n

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## Operation Iraqi Freedom

*Pfc. Charlie C. Antonio, 28, Kahului, Hawaii, April 18, 2010* ♦ *Pfc. William A. Blount, 21, Petal, Miss., April 7, 2010*  
*1st Lt. Robert W. Collins, 24, Tyrone, Ga., April 7, 2010* ♦ *Sgt. Kurt E. Kruize, 35, Hancock, Minn., April 4, 2010*  
*Pfc. Raymond N. Pacleb, 31, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 29, 2010* ♦ *Staff Sgt. James R. Patton, 23, Fort Benning, Ga., April 18, 2010*  
*Staff Sgt. Christopher D. Worrell, 35, Virginia Beach, Va., April 22, 2010*

## Operation Enduring Freedom

*Sgt. Robert J. Barrett, 20, Fall River, Mass., April 19, 2010* ♦ *Sgt. Roberto E. Diaz Borio, 47, San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 8, 2010*  
*Staff Sgt. Scott W. Brunkhorst, 25, Fayetteville, N.C., March 30, 2010* ♦ *Sgt. Sean M. Durkin, 24, Aurora, Colo., April 9, 2010*  
*Pfc. Jonathon D. Hall, 23, Chattanooga, Tenn., April 8, 2010* ♦ *Sgt. Michael K. Ingram Jr., 23, Monroe, Mich., April 17, 2010*  
*Cpl. Michael D. Jankiewicz, 23, Ramsey, N.J., April 9, 2010* ♦ *Sgt. Ronald A. Kubik, 21, Brielle, N.J., April 23, 2010*  
*Command Sgt. Maj. John K. Laborde, 53, Waterloo, Iowa, April 22, 2010* ♦ *Pfc. James L. Miller, 21, Yakima, Wash., March 29, 2010*  
*Sgt. Jason A. Santora, 25, Farmingville, N.Y., April 23, 2010* ♦ *Sgt. Randolph A. Sigley, 28, Richmond, Ky., April 18, 2010*

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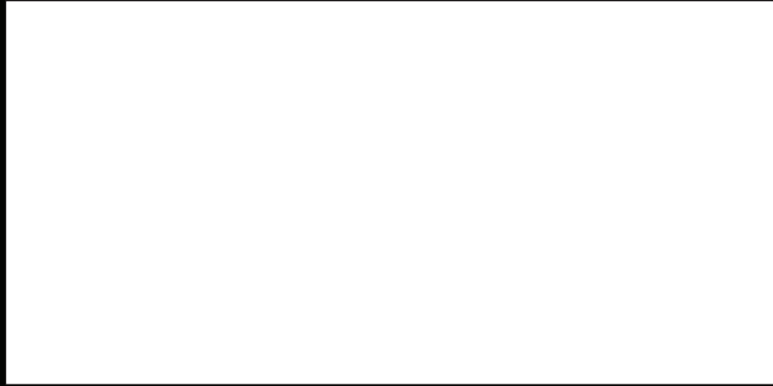


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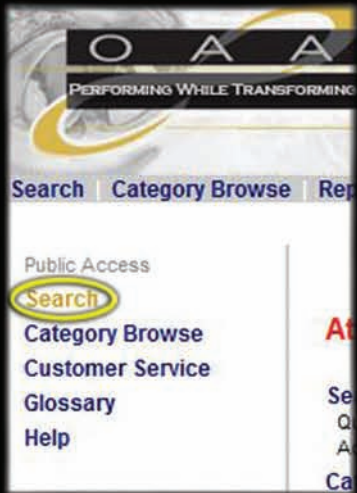
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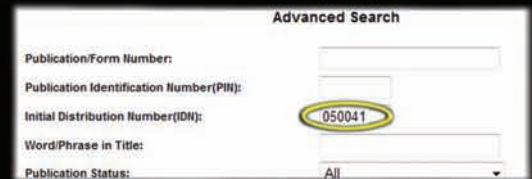
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